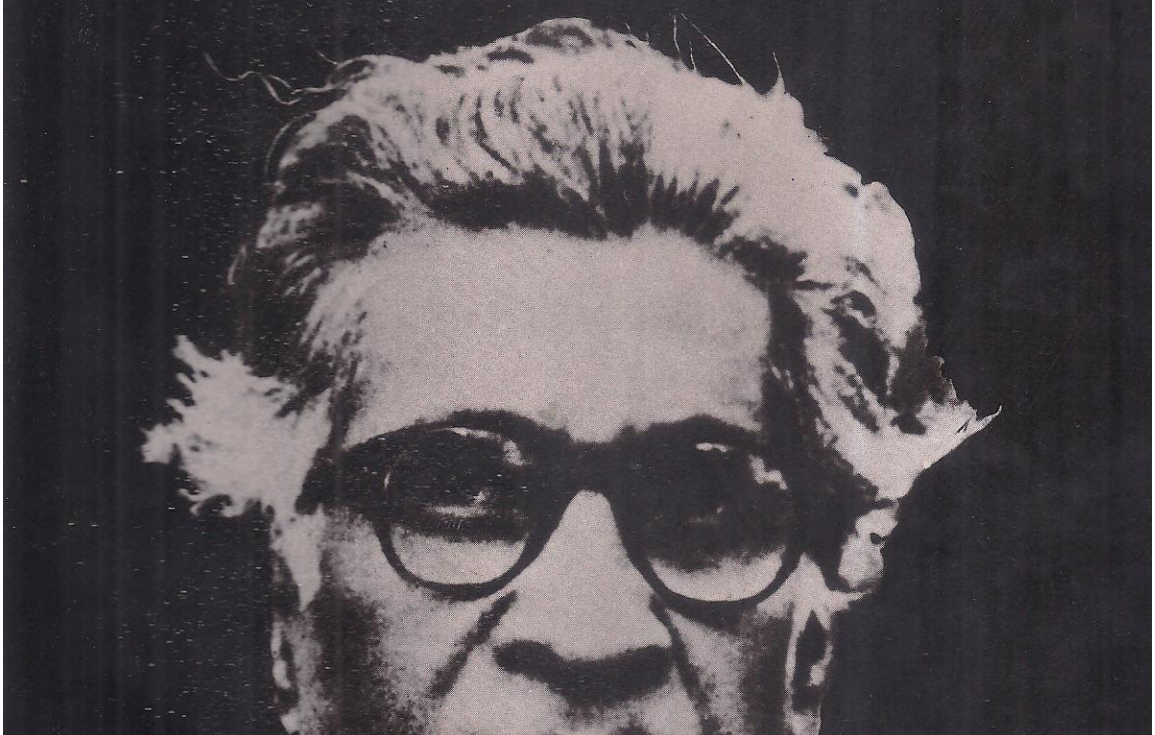
SELECTED WORKS OF

M. N. ROY

VOLUME 1 · 1917–1922

Edited by Sibnarayan Ray



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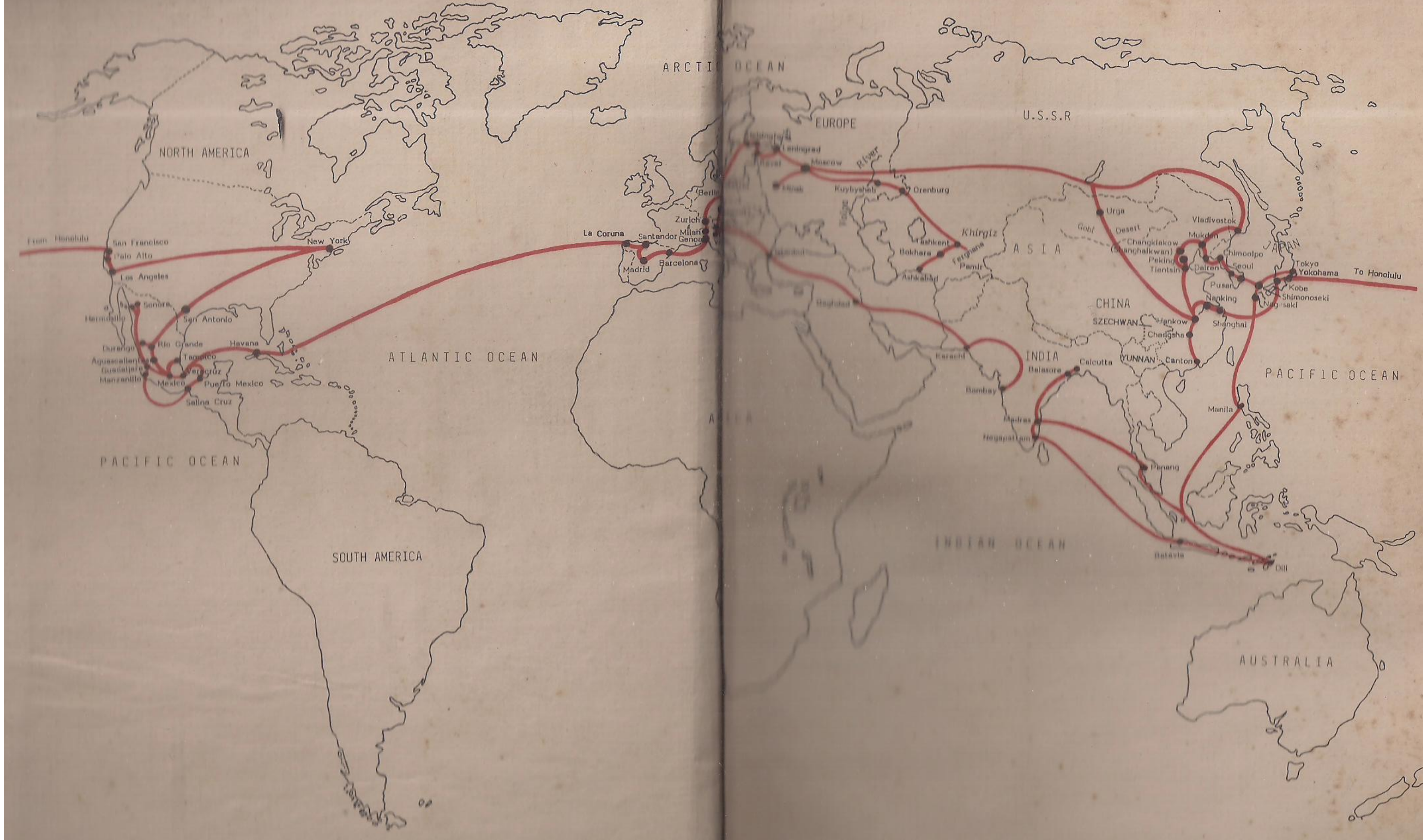
M. N. Roy was an outstanding intellectual-activist of the first half of the twentieth century. He had few peers in the diversity and richness of his revolutionary experience. He took an active and leading part in revolutionary movements in India, Mexico, the Soviet Union and China. Roy was a political contemporary and colleague of stalwarts like Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Mao, Ho Chi Minh, Bukharin, Zinoviev and Borodin. The vicissitudes of Roy's life were indeed extraordinary. At the same time, he was a penetrating and prolific writer, whose works run to over a hundred titles. His writings are indicative of his extraordinary analytical ability and the transcontinental sweep of his vision.

Volume 1 of the *Selected Works* contain some of Roy's major writings between 1917 and 1922. These include his observations of the Mexican period, ideological theses, speeches and writings of the early communist period, the entire text of his classic, *India in Transition* and selections from *The Vanguard* and *The Advance-Guard*.

Professor Sibnarayan Ray was a colleague of M. N. Roy in his later years and has taught at the universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Melbourne.

Back panel illustration: Facsimile of excerpts from a letter written by M. N. Roy to Ellen Gottschalk during his detention in Kanpur jail, August 1931. Courtesy Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.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M. N. Roy's odyssey in quest of freedom
Movements 1915–1930
India · Malaysia · Indonesia · Philippines · Japan · Korea ·
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Switzerland · Germany · Finland · Soviet Union · China ·
Soviet Union · Germany · Italy · Turkey · Iraq · India ·

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M. N. ROY
Volume 1
1917–1922

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Edited by
SIBNARAYAN RAY

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When, as a school boy of fourteen, I began my political life, which may end in nothing, I wanted to be free. Independence, complete and absolute, is a new fangled idea. The old fashioned revolutionaries throught in terms of freedom. In those days, we had not read Marx. We did not know about the existence of the proletariat. Still, many spent their lives in jail and went to the gallows. There was no proletariat to propel them. They were not conscious of class struggle. They did not have the dream of Communism. But they had the human urge to revolt against the intolerable conditions of life. They did not know exactly how those conditions could be changed. But they tried to change them, anyhow. I began my political life with that spirit, and I still draw my inspiration rather from that spirit than from the three Volumes of *Capital* or three-hundred volumes by the Marxists.

M. N. Roy
New Orientation, Calcutta, 1982
pp. 121–22

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PLATES

(*following p. 416*)

Entry in Bengali on page 3 of the diary of Dinabandhu Bhattacharya, M. N. Roy's father. Translated, the entry reads:

> 'By that wife [i.e. the second wife, Basanta Kumari—S.N.R.] a second son with *rashi* name Sreeman Girindranath Bhattacharya, to be publicly called Sreeman Narendranath Bhattacharya, was born at the Arbalia house on Monday, 8 Chaitra, 1293 [Bangabda, or the Bengali year—S.N.R.] at 1.30 p.m. Major lunar Phalgun, minor lunar Chaitra, twelfth day of the New Moon, Dhanishtha Nakshtra, Kumbha Rashi.'

[According to *Puratan Panjika,* Part II (a consolidated Bengali almanac for the Bengali years 1282–1311), the entry date given above corresponds to 21 March, 1887. S.N.R.]

Courtesy Mrs Umarani Bhattacharya, sister-in-law of M. N. Roy.

Narendra Nath Bhattacharya, 1910.

Courtesy late Y. B. Chavan. From Police records.

Jatindra Nath Mukherji, leader of the planned uprising in 1915.

From the collection of the late Ellen Roy.

Narendra Nath Bhattacharya as 'Charles A. Martin' in 1916.

From the collection of the late Ellen Roy.

Evelyn Trent at Stanford University in 1915.

Courtesy Sri Samaren Roy

M. N. Roy in Mexico 1918.

From the collection of the late Ellen Roy.

President Venustiano Carranza of Mexico in 1919.

Editor's collection. Copy of an old photograph from Mexico.

Michael Borodin in the 1920s.

Editor's collection. Copy of an old photograph published in *International News*.

Rosa Luxemburg.

Editor's collection. Copy of a photograph received from the late Ruth Fischer.

August Thalheimer.

Editor's collection. Copy of a photograph received from Mrs Claire Thalheimer, widow of August Thalheimer.

M. N. Roy at the Second Congress of the Communist International, 1920.

In the picture:
Back Row: Karl Radek (extreme left, cigarette in mouth); Bukharin (third from left, smiling).
Front Row: Lenin; behind him Gorky (with moustache and balding head); next to him Zinoviev (tousled hair, chubby face); behind him M. N. Roy (tall, at top of steps).

From *The Communist International*, Vol. 3, No. 13, 1920.

Angelica Balabanoff.

Angelica Balabanoff, secretary of the Zimmerwald organization, became the first secretary of the Communist International when it was founded in March 1919, but she held this position only for a very short period.

Editor's collection. Copy of a photograph received from the late Ruth Fischer.

Nikolai Bukharin.

Editor's collection. Copy of a sketch received from the late Ruth Fischer.

Zinoviev addressing a crowd in 1918. Later he became President of the Communist International.

Editor's collection. Copy of a photograph received from the late Ruth Fischer.

M. N. Roy with Oriental delegates at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, 1922.

Standing: Tan Malaka (third from left); next to him, Roy.
Seated: First, second and third from left (respectively); Ho Chi Minh, Eizo Kondo, Sen Katayama.

From the collection of the late Ellen Roy.

M. N. Roy at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, 1922.

Foreground: Bertram Wolfe (second from left), Bukharin reclining on Zinoviev, Roy (partly hidden, behind Zinoviev).
Seated: Claude McKay (second from left), Ho Chi Minh (sixth), Karl Radek (with pipe, eighth), Sen Katayama (ninth), Tan Malaka (tenth), Eizo Kondo (eleventh).

From the collection of the late Ellen Roy.

MAPS

M. N. Roy's odyssey in quest of freedom (*endpapers*)
M. N. Roy's movements 1915–19 (*facing p. 14*)
M. N. Roy's movements in 1920 (*facing p. 20*)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Long before I accepted from the Indian Renaissance Institute and the M. N. Roy Centenary Celebration Organizing Committee, the responsibility of editing the *Selected Works of M. N. Roy* in six volumes, I had started looking for and collecting material relating to the life and works of Roy. Over the years I have received help, advice and encouragement from many individuals and institutions but for which the present undertaking would have been altogether beyond my competence and resources. Quite a few of these generous people are now, alas, dead. I gratefully place on record my debt to them and acknowledge my obligation to others who are, happily, with us and whose help I continue to count upon in completing this project. The institutions which have, at one time or another, provided me or my assistants with research and copying facilities, or furnished me with microfilms or photocopies of source material or of rare secondary works of reference, or helped me in any manner are listed below:

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University of Melbourne, Baillieu Library, Parkville, Victoria, Australia
University of Michigan Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan

University of Queensland Library, St. Lucia, Queensland, Australia
West Bengal State Archives (Intelligence Branch Records), Calcutta

I wish particularly to record my very deep appreciation of the prompt and courteous services rendered by the staff of the Baillieu Library during the period of my teaching and research work at the University of Melbourne.

Among persons to whom this project owes much, first and foremost, are naturally M. N. Roy and his wife Ellen Roy. I had the great privilege of working very closely with the Roys from 1946 to 1954 and with Ellen Roy till her death in 1960. The M. N. Roy Archives which are now housed in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library were organized by Ellen Roy in the late 1950s. I also remember with gratitude the kindness shown to me by Evelyn Trent-Jones and Louise Geissler, and I mourn the mysterious disappearance of their personal papers after their death. I profited from conversations, interviews and/or correspondence with Ruth Fischer, Rose Froelich, Louise and Robert Gottschalk, Claire Thalheimer, Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyay, Hari Kumar Chakravarty, A. C. N. Nambiar, Sunder Kabadi and Anadi Bhaduri. Richard L. Park was an unfailing source of help and good advice as was G. D. Parikh. Roy's youngest brother, Lalit Bhattacharya, had kindly let me photograph some passages from his father's notebook and written down for me some details of the Bhattacharya family. To his widow, Umarani, and their son, Sanat, I am deeply indebted for the subsequent gift of a photocopy of the full text of the notebook and family tree of Dinabandhu Bhattacharya.

In tracing certain source material and/or securing microfilms or photocopies of the same, I have received valuable assistance from Gerd Calleson of Copenhagen, Herr Pinkus of Zurich, Margret Kuhlman of Gruppe Arbeiterpolitik of Bremen, Graciela Gonzalez Zuloaga of Guadalajara, Rudi Christen of Sydney and V. C. Joshi and A. K. Avasthi of Nehru Memorial Museum. Several maps of Roy's movements abroad have been prepared by Kabir Sur Chaudhuri, Nandini Sarkar and Amit Sarkar under the supervision of Dilip Kumar Mitra, Deputy Librarian in charge of the Map Division of the National Library, Calcutta, in accordance with my specification and on the basis of maps available in the National Library. A set of pictures and documents in my collection have been photocopied by Madhusudan Pal and Kabir Sur Chowdhury. Samaren Roy gave me prints of two photographs in his collection, and M.L. Sen (Patna), Anath Mitra (Calcutta), K. Satyanarayana (Rajahmundry), Savitri Nigam (Lucknow) and B. R. Sukhtankar (Pune) allowed me the use of some old pamphlets and early issues of *Independent India* and the *Radical Humanist*.

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The project has been made possible by a grant to the Indian Renaissance Institute from the Government of Uttar Pradesh. I am thankful to the Institute and particularly to the Chairman of its Board of Trustees, V. M. Tarkunde, for inviting me to edit the *Selected Works*. While my own editorial services are purely honorary, salaries of two editorial assistants and related preparatory expenses are borne by the Institute. At various stages in the preparation of this volume I have received useful support from my friend Sushil Bhadra. Publication arrangements have been negotiated by the Secretary of the M. N. Roy Centenary Celebration Organizing Committee, R. M. Pal, with Ravi Dayal of Oxford University Press. Amlan Datta has kindly read the introduction to the first volume. Maintenance of a gradually growing collection of Roy's published writings (books, pamphlets, periodicals) is being taken care of by Saroj Mitra of the Calcutta branch of the Indian Renaissance Institute. I thank them all besides many others who are not specifically mentioned here but who have in one way or another contributed to my understanding of M. N. Roy and his times. However, for all the blemishes and shortcomings of my editorial work I bear full responsibility.

Calcutta
20 November 1985.

Sibnarayan Ray

INTRODUCTION

Preliminary observations

The first half of our century was an age of wars and revolutions. It saw the end of what K. M. Panikkar called 'the Vasco Da Gama Epoch of Asian History'.[1] The first world war marked the beginning of the dissolution of the empires of Europe; the second world war virtually completed the process. The military victory of the allied powers did not save Britain, France or the Netherlands from losing their farflung colonies. In Asia and Africa sovereign states arose proclaiming one after another their independence of foreign domination in the decades which followed the second world war. One of the first to become independent was India which, in the process, set itself up as a model to others.

Besides this phenomenal collapse of west European empires and the beginning of the emergence of new nations and states in what is currently called the Third World, these decades also witnessed revolutions in some of the most populous countries. In the nineteenth century Karl Marx had anticipated revolutions in the most industrially developed societies of the West. However, history did not quite corroborate his anticipations. Instead, the first revolution of the century took place in backward Russia where the antiquated regime of the Tsars was quickly overthrown, and under Lenin's leadership, the highly centralized and determined Bolshevik Party captured power from the Provisional Government and took upon itself the task of radically altering Russian society in the shortest possible time. It established a totalitarian dictatorship and used a part of the country's resources in promoting revolutionary movements abroad which would draw inspiration and guidance from the Bolsheviks and remain under Russian control.[2] China experienced the other major revolution. After decades of civil war and war against the Japanese invaders, this vast and populous country also came under a communist dictatorship which, as in Russia, was committed to revolution. A different model evolved in Mexico. There, after centuries of foreign rule, decades of *porfiriato* dictatorship, a shorter period of the 'Epic Revolution' (1910–24), the country at last reached a measure of sustained political stability and economic growth, rather rare in the violent and volatile atmosphere of Latin America.[3]

---

[1] K. M. Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance*, London, 1955. Also see Stewart C. Easton, *The Rise and Fall of Western Colonialism*, New York, 1964.

[2] On the theme of the Russian revolution and the relations between the Soviet State and the Communist International the literature is extensive and continues to grow. Some of the more important studies and sources are: W. H. Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution*, 2 vols. New York, 1935; E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, 3 vols. Penguin edn. 1973, 1976; R. V. Daniels (ed.), *A Documentary History of Communism*, 2 vols, New York, 1962; Franz Borkenau, *World Communism*, Ann Arbor, 1962; Jane Degras (ed.), *The Communist International*, 3 vols., London, 1956, 1971.

Wars, upheavals and revolutions involve large masses of people who are moved by forces they rarely understand and almost never can control. Totalitarianism which emerged as a political phenomenon in the inter-war decades was a product as much of mass-discontent and upheaval as of mass-manipulation which had been facilitated by newly invented and very powerful instruments and systems of communication and regimentation.[4] If break-up of old empires and overthrow of ancient regimes were some of the welcome developments of the first half of this century, then on the other side would be counted the growing pressures to constrict the scope of individual freedom and responsibility and the trends towards centralization of power and mechanization of human life. The second half of the century has not seen any weakening of these pressures and trends.

However, these great upheavals also produced persons who not only had active roles in providing the movements with ideas, programmes, organization and leadership, but at least in some cases also offered illuminating analyses and assessments of the developments in which they were themselves involved. These were intellectual-activists in the tradition of the radicals of France in the eighteenth century, or of the 'intelligentsia' in Russia in the nineteenth.[5] In the language of the existentialists they were 'committed' or 'engagé', and therefore, could not be expected to have that kind of distance or 'objectivity' in their approach which is the proclaimed pursuit of academic writers. However, at their best, some of them brought, as if in compensation, a kind of insight or key to the 'meaning' of events—an insight which participants, not observers, are privileged to possess, and without which such complex human phenomena as revolutions might only be superficially chronicled, leaving their human springs of action altogether incomprehensible. In the writings no less than in the careers of these intellectual revolutionaries may be found important clues to the history of our times, and indicators of courses from our immediate past to the not-too-distant future of the human race.

---

[3] On Mexican developments, H. B. Parkes, *A History of Mexico*, London, 1962; C. C. Cumberland, *Mexico—the Struggle for Modernity*, New York, 1964; Anita Brenner, *The Wind that Swept Mexico 1910–42: the History of the Mexican Revolution*, New York, 1943.

[4] Karl Jaspers, *Man in the Modern Age*, New York, 1957; K. Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, London, 1940; Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New York 1951; C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*, New York, 1956; Vance Packard, *The Hidden Persuaders*, London, 1958.

[5] R. Michels, 'Intellectuals', *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 8, New York, 1932; K. Urwin, *A Century for Freedom*, London, 1946; Isaiah Berlin, *Russian Thinkers*, Penguin, 1979; S. N. Ray, *The Intellectuals*, Calcutta, 1986.

Of the several people that come to mind in this connection one of the most outstanding was M. N. Roy. In the diversity and richness of his revolutionary experience he had few peers even in this century; he took an active and leading part in revolutionary movements in India, Mexico, the Soviet Union and China. The vicissitudes of his life were indeed extraordinary. His more influential and well-known political contemporaries who were also ideologues, activists and authors—Lenin, Gandhi, Trotsky, Mao or Nehru—did not have quite the sweep of transcontinental range of his direct political praxis. At the same time he was a penetrating and prolific writer whose published books and pamphlets run over a hundred titles. He wrote in several languages which included English, Spanish, German, French and Russian; edited a succession of periodicals with few breaks from 1922 till his death in 1954; and left behind nine large volumes of manuscripts written during more than five years spent in Indian jails. His works include statements of his revolutionary ideas and programmes, commentaries on the major events of the time, theoretical inquiries and formulations about human nature and the cosmos, knowledge and morality, history and society, political economy and cultural change, critiques of Indian tradition, culture and ethos, and personal recollections, correspondence, notes, reports, drafts and stenograms of his lectures and seminars. They are records not only of his own extraordinary career but also of some of the most momentous and dramatic developments of our age. Besides, they show his own ideological development from revolutionary nationalism to communism and finally to scientific, radical and cosmopolitical humanism, thereby illustrating three major phases and aspects of the intellectual-cultural history of our age and often illuminating the subtle and complex interconnections among them.

Problems of preparing a definitive edition

Fortunately a good part of this vast and varied material was gathered by his wife Ellen Roy (1904–60) during the last years of her life, and the collection is now preserved in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library at New Delhi. She also prepared a list of such publications of Roy as were in the collection or as had been mentioned by Roy but copies of which could not be procured or traced. This list was published in the weekly *Radical Humanist* (of which she and I were at that time joint editors). In the same year Mr Patrick Wilson brought out, under the Modern India Project of the University of California at Berkeley, a 'Preliminary Checklist of the writings of M. N. Roy' which contained 124 titles. In 1957 he produced a 'revised checklist' which gave 133 items, but this too was admittedly very incomplete since it did not include Roy's voluminous contributions to periodicals and newspapers, his unpublished writings and other relevant material.[6]

A very considerable part of Roy's career had to be spent underground. He had joined a secret revolutionary group in Bengal at the age of eighteen. British Intelligence agents, not only in India but also abroad, were ceaselessly after him; to avoid detection he had frequently to adopt new pseudonyms and send out his writings, instructions and publications in a clandestine manner. Even during the years when he was a member of the topmost hierarchy of the Communist International he had to move time and again from one country of Europe to another on expulsion orders of respective governments or to avoid the hazards of extradition. Many of his writings were on publication proscribed by the government of India; confidential communications were intercepted and seized by the police. These factors make a comprehensive collection of his writings extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible; and the state archives in the Soviet Union and China where much material pertaining to his life and works is likely to be found are not yet freely accessible to bonafide noncommunist scholars from abroad. In Mexico documents and periodicals belonging to the period of the 'Epic Revolution', especially those which might contain references to the founding of the Socialist and Communist Parties, are extremely hard to find, even in major libraries and archives. Recollections are plentiful but not contemporaneously relevant publications in the nature of hard primary source material.

The problems of preparing a comprehensive checklist and a detailed and authentic account of his career are many and I have been made increasingly conscious of these in the course of my preparatory work for a full-length biography of Roy. Thus, for example the late Saralabala Sarkar (1875–1961), who knew him well as a young revolutionary at Calcutta, stated categorically in a memorial essay that he was a frequent contributor to the organs of the Bengali political militants in the first decade of the century; but since the contributors, for obvious reasons, chose to remain anonymous, authorship of specific items may at best be guessed at and not definitely attributed.[7] Besides, traces of many of these persecuted and/or proscribed journals have almost totally disappeared; a few fragments have survived, sometimes only in poor English translations in police records. Again, during his years in Mexico Roy wrote in several periodicals; they are mentioned in his *Memoirs* and the recollections of other contemporaries, but while some of his books and pamphlets in Spanish have been located and copies obtained, relevant sets of these periodicals remain largely untraced. In 1927 after his return from China Roy submitted to the Comintern a report which included all relevant documents pertaining to the period of his stay in China. A selection of these documents was published officially by the State Publishing department in 1929 in a volume under the title '*Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia i Kommunisticheskii internatsional; sbornik statei i materialov*' (Moskva, Leningrad, Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo; 207 p.). But Roy's formal break with the Comintern also took place in 1929, and the volume was presumably never translated into languages other than Russian nor circulated outside the Soviet Union. At Moscow's request Roy had earlier sent back his original manuscript from his Berlin headquarters. In any case no copy of the volume was known to exist, at the time of Roy's death, outside the communist archives in the Soviet Union. In the 1950s, however, two copies of this volume were discovered, one each at the University of California Library and the Hoover Institute Library at Stanford. It was translated by Helen I. Powers and edited and published by Robert C. North and Xenia J. Eudin in 1963 with a long introduction.[8] It contained a collection of theses and proclamations together with speeches and articles by Roy but, as the editors pointed out, not the stenographic reports of the proceedings of the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of China as mentioned by Roy in the introduction to his major work *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China*. These stenographic reports may still be preserved in the Soviet archives as also Roy's original manuscript. It is also more than likely that important contemporary material in Chinese bearing on developments of this period may be found in the Chinese Archives.

---

[6] Patrick Wilson, *A Checklist of the Writings of M. N. Roy*, Modern India Project, Bibliographical Study No. 1 (Revised), Berkeley, 1957 (mimeo); S. N. Ray (ed.), *M. N. Roy: Philosopher-Revolutionary*, (first edn.), Calcutta, 1959, pp. 59–63.

In his *Memoirs* Roy mentioned his close personal relationship with some of the colleagues of Rosa Luxemburg and other founders of the German Communist party, especially Heinrich Brandler and August

---

[7] Saralabala Sarkar, *Desh* (Bengali Weekly), 29 January, 1955. For an English translation of her essay, S. N. Ray (ed.), *M. N. Roy: Philosopher-Revolutionary*, (enlarged second edn.), Cacutta, 1984, pp. 24–8.

[8] Robert C. North and Xenia J. Eudin, *M. N. Roy's Mission to China: The Communist-Kuomintang Split*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963.

Thalheimer, who later constituted the leadership of the 'Communist Opposition' in Germany after the disastrous Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928. Roy contributed to the journals of the 'Opposition', *Gegen den Strom*, and *International Nachrichten der Kom. Opp* (INKOPP), but these articles were never published in book form, nor to my knowledge has any writer on Roy shown any acquaintance with their contents so far. I have been able to trace a fairly large number of these articles in a private archive in Copenhagen and obtain copies; but they may only be a part of a larger body of his contributions to various periodicals of this period.[9] In recent years some Soviet writers in their criticism of Roy's position on the National and Colonial question have referred to the existence of a body of writings and documents in the Soviet archives which belong to the 1920s and relate to Roy.[10] However, my inquiries addressed to some of these scholars about how to have access to this material or obtain photocopies of the same have not elicited any response. More than fifty years after his break with the Comintern and thirty years after his death, Roy's thesis of 'revolution from below' would still seem to be an anathema which may not be openly considered by Soviet scholars except to condemn it as 'left sectarian' in accordance with the official line.

A comprehensive and authoritative edition of the Collected Works of M. N. Roy, however important it may be for an understanding and reconstruction of the history of revolutionary ideologies and movements of our times, requires conditions which are thus not currently available. A sustained transcontinental search for material in many archives, libraries and personal collections is involved; in some countries, permission of governments and co-operation of various functionaries would be indispensable; a team of multilingual scholars would have to be engaged for a fairly long duration of time; and the size of such an edition which may easily run into a score of thick volumes would be intimidating to editors and publishers, unless the project is fully supported by substantial subsidies. Instead of waiting indefinitely for such favourable conditions it seemed sensible to undertake what would obviously be a more modest but nonetheless worthy enterprise, namely, to prepare and publish an edition of the Selected Works of M. N. Roy. At least that has been the view of the Indian Renaissance Institute which was founded by Roy and his wife Ellen in 1946 and which holds the copyright to all Roy's works, published and unpublished. Roy's birth centenary falls in 1987, and the Centenary Committee which was formed at the initiative of the Institute decided that in its programme of Centenary Celebrations top priority was to be given to the preparation and publication of an edition of the Selected Works. I was asked by the Committee to edit the Volumes and I agreed to do so.

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[9] Mr Gerd Callesen of Arbejderbevaegelsens Bibliotek og Arkiv of Copenhagen furnished me with indexes of both *Gegen den Strom* and *INKOPP*, and after I had combed through them and prepared a list of Roy's articles, he generously allowed me to have photocopies of the listed articles. He helped me to get in touch with Claire Thalheimer, widow of Roy's close friend and one of the founders of the German Communist Party, August Thalheimer. Through him I also obtained replies to my questions regarding Roy and the 'Opposition' from Rose Froelich, widow of Paul Froelich, another leading figure of the German Communist Party during the 1920s.

[10] M. A. Persits, *Revolutionaries of India in Soviet Russia*, Moscow, 1983; R. A. Ulyanovsky (ed.), *The Comintern and the East*, 3 vols., Moscow, 1978, 1979, 1981.

Centenary edition of Selected Works: guidelines

In preparing this edition I have set myself the following general guidelines:

(*a*) Roy's writings and speeches are to be arranged, as far as practicable, in a chronological order in the Selected Works.

(*b*) However, since not a few of Roy's writings of the 1940s and early 1950s are available as single books or pamphlets, relatively greater space is to be given in this edition to his early writings most of which have been inaccessible or out of print for a long time. In doing so both their intrinsic worth and historical importance are, of course, to be taken into account.

(*c*) Where Roy's writings and speeches are available in his own words in English, or where the English version was published with his approval or in his life time, they are to be used for selection. However, where published English versions are not known to exist (as, for example, his writings in Spanish, and some of his contributions in German to the Communist Opposition press), or are not available, translations are to be made into English from the original version and these are to be doubly checked before any such work is incorporated in this edition.

(*d*) While full texts of speeches, articles, monographs and books are to be given wherever possible, in not a few cases excisions would be unavoidable from sheer considerations of available space. Where only excerpts are included, or portions of the texts are excluded, such editorial exercise is to be clearly and specifically indicated and every care is to be taken that the argument of the full text does not suffer, or, is not in any way distorted or misrepresented by such excerption, deletion or abridgement.

(*e*) Although relatively more space is given to the earlier and less easily available writings, the Selected Works as a whole are to be representative of his writings spread over a period of thirty-seven years (1917–54)—representative of the phases in his career, or stages in the development of his ideas and ideals, and of his styles and forms of writings. However, two of his very major books are to be regretfully excluded from the Selected Works edition: *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China* (689 pages) and *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* (308+330 pages). They are too large in size to be included in full and integral in conception to be excerpted. It is presumed that arrangements are to be made to reprint them in full as independent books or as supplementary volumes to the Selected Works.

(*f*) Each volume is to have a general introduction which would include a brief outline of Roy's life and indicate the scope and plan of the Selected Works project. The specific contexts of the Works included in each particular volume are to be briefly provided in a separate section of the introduction. Explanatory notes and references are to be kept to the minimum; they are to be given only where this is recognized to be strictly necessary. The edition is addressed primarily to the common reader who takes a sustained interest in the intellectual and political developments of this century. Such readers will find in the works of this exceptionally gifted and dedicated protagonist a key to the meaning and direction of these developments. At the same time the edition is also intended to be useful as a source book to scholars, and students specializaing in revolutionary movements, communism, decolonization, modern India, philosophy and practice of radical humanism and, of course, M. N. Roy.

Plan of this edition of Selected Works

The present edition of Selected Works is planned to consist of six volumes. They are to be prepared and published in the following sequence:

Volume One (1917–22): Translation of Spanish writings of the Mexican period, theses, speeches and writings of the early communist period including the classic *India in Transition*, and selections from *The Vanguard* and *The Advance-Guard*.

Volume Two (1922–27): Later Comintern period; further selections from *The Vanguard*, *The Masses* and other periodicals; from the minutes, proceedings and bulletins of Comintern congresses and meetings; and texts in full or in part of such books as *One Year of Non-Cooperation*, *Political Letters*, *The Aftermath of Non-Cooperation* and *The Future of Indian Politics*.

Volume Three (1927–36): Some China documents; Roy's break with the Comintern and contributions to the 'Comintern Opposition'; selections from his prison writings, previously published and unpublished; landmarks in his intellectual development from orthodox Marxism to a broader and more responsive variety of radicalism.

Volume Four (1936–46): Selections from *Independent India* and his books, monographs, lectures, mainly of the war period and of the Radical Democratic Party.

Volume Five (1946–54): Selected writings of the period beginning with the summer study camp at Dehradun in 1946 which formulated the basic principles of Radical Humanism and ending with his death in 1954, the main aim being to bring out the nature of the radical humanist philosophy and programme which Roy developed during the last years of his life.

Volume Six: Devoted to his autobiographical writings, letters, documents, and previously unpublished material from the M. N. Roy Archives.

If *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China* and *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* are eventually included in this edition they will constitute volumes Seven and Eight respectively of the Selected Works.

LIFE OF M. N. ROY

In an autobiographical statement prepared by M. N. Roy in 1952 while applying for a visa he wrote: 'I was born as Narendra Nath Bhattacharya and adopted the name of M. N. Roy while in the United States of America'.[11] At the time of his death the exact date and year of his birth was not known although in old police records the year mentioned was 1886.[12] Shortly after Roy's death his youngest brother produced a diary which had been kept by their father and which gave the birth dates of all his children. According to the entry in the father's handwriting Roy was born at 'Arbelia on Monday, 8 Chaitra, 1293 Bengali Sambat, at 1.30 pm.' Converted to the calculations of the Gregorian (now universally used) calendar, his birth date is 21 March 1887. At his birth he was given the name Narendra Nath Bhattacharya together with the Zodiacal name (Rashinam) Girindra Nath, the latter name strictly to be mentioned only in the horoscope and not used publicly that being the custom among high caste Hindus. Until he adopted the name M. N. Roy (Manabendra Nath Roy) at Stanford and began using it consistently in his published works and writings he was generally known as Narendra Nath or, in short, Naren in India (although he had a family nickname, Dona).

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[11] S. N. Ray (ed.), *M. N. Roy: Philosopher-Revolutionary* (revised and enlarged edn.), Calcutta, 1984, p. 9.

[12] History Sheet No. 687 of Narendra Nath Bhattacharji (no. 1) prepared by L. N. Bird, Special Assistant, Intelligence Branch, C.I.D., completed up to November, 1912; reprinted in S. N. Ray, ibid. (1984), pp. 12–23.

Early Years

Naren's paternal grandfather Bhairavananda Bhattacharya was the headpriest (*Debait*) of the Goddess Ksheputeswari in the village of Ksheput in the Midnapore district of West Bengal. The Bhattacharyas were Sakta brahmans who, according to local belief, had been specially chosen to be her hereditary priests by Ksheputeswari who, again according to tradition, was one of the incarnations of the Great Goddess of the Bengali Sakti cult.[13] Naren's father Dinabandhu had inherited this position, but decline in family fortunes and the large size of the family (he had nine brothers and one sister) forced him to look for alternative sources of income. Eventually he found employment as Head Pandit (or teacher of Sanskrit) in a junior high school at Arbelia, a village in the 24 Parganas near Calcutta. However, he used to return to the ancestral village to perform his priestly duties on special annual occasions.

Dinabandhu married twice and in his turn produced a large family of ten children. By his first wife Kadam Kumari who died in 1868 he had a daughter Lakshmimoni and a son Charuchandra. In 1872 he married Basanta Kumari who bore him eight children: Golap, Sushil, Sarojini, Naren, Phani, Panna, Joydurga, and Lalit. Naren was the fourth child of the second marriage and third male child of his father.[14]

Naren spent the first eleven years of his life at Arbelia where he studied up to the sixth standard or class of the local Jnan Vikasini school. In 1898 the family moved to Kodalia, a village adjacent to the rail-station Changripota, also in the 24 Parganas and only a few miles from the metropolis. This was Naren's mother's village; his maternal grandfather Ramtaran Chakravarty who had no male child had bequeathed his house and property to Naren's parents. Dinabandhu now retired from teaching and started 'a money-lending business'. The priest-pandit-mahajan did not seem to have much influence on his son, but Changripota, though a village, had already produced its fair crop of personalities who ably represented the new spirit of enlightenment and reform in nineteenth-century Bengal. Among the men of the Bengal Renaissance from Changripota were Dwaraka Nath Vidyabhushan (1820–86), the illustrious founder-editor of the journal *Somprakash*, and his even more famous nephew, Sivanath Sastri (1847–1919), leader of Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, who made a strong impact on the educated youth of contemporary Bengal.

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[13] On the Sakti Cult, D. C. Sircar (ed.), *The Sakti Cult and Tara*, Calcutta 1967; S. B. Dasgupta, *Bharater Sakti Sadhana O Sakta Sahitya* (Bengali), Calcutta, 1961; N. N. Bhattacharya, *The Indian Mother Goddess*, Calcutta, 1971. For Roy's own account of Ksheputeswari and his ancestors, 'Disintegration of a Priestly Family', *The Radical Humanist*, Vol. XVIII, Nos. 6–7, pp. 66–68, 72–74.

[14] From Dinabandhu's diary from which details were furnished by his youngest son Lalit Bhattacharya.

From 1898 to 1905 Naren studied at Harinabhi Anglo-Sanskrit school. Kodalia, Changripota and Harinabhi are a cluster of villages about twelve miles south of Calcutta and easily accessible by train. Even as a schoolboy Naren was noted for his intrepidity, independence, intellectual curiosity and deep compassion for the downtrodden. With some of his classmates he organized a volunteer group whose activities included nursing people who were stricken with infectious and often fatal diseases like cholera and small pox. The group also raised alms to feed the starving in times of famine; it provided free funeral services in the case of people who had died as destitutes or who had been ostracized by the village community for breaking some caste rule or other. Besides Dwaraka Nath and Sivanath Sastri, Naren during his adolescence also drew inspiration from the writings of Bankim Chandra Chatterji (1838–94) and Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902).

1905 was a turning point in Naren's life. His father died in May that year; the Partition of Bengal was formally announced in July and came into effect in October, provoking a country-wide movement against it, and militant nationalist groups and secret revolutionary societies, some of them already formed, became active in different parts of Bengal. Naren who was then in his final year at school organized an anti-partition meeting and procession against the explicit instruction of his headmaster; he was rusticated along with several of his schoolmates. He had already been introduced to the revolutionary underground organization Anushilan Samiti which had been formed in 1902; he now decided to take the plunge and joined the organization.

Career of a revolutionary: the first phase

However, he did not give up studies or voluntary social service activities although these now became ancillary to his central commitment—Indian independence. He was sent by the Samiti to organize famine relief work in Orissa, and on his return became a member of the 'inner circle' of the Samiti. He was also admitted to the newly started Bengal National College and School where Aurobindo Ghose (1872–1950) was the Principal. He passed its Entrance Examination and 'got a medal'; he then studied at the Bengal Technical Institute which offered courses in Engineering and Chemistry. At the same time he organized a small and close-knit underground revolutionary group in his own village which experimented with the manufacture of explosives and had shooting practice in the Sunderbans. To provide themselves with arms and maintain themselves as full-time workers the revolutionaries needed money; and political robbery (*dakati*) was considered justified as a means as long as the end was the country's freedom from foreign rule. On 6 December 1907 the first officially recorded political robbery in Bengal took place at Changripota under Naren's leadership; he was subsequently arrested, charged and tried, but released on the ground of insufficient evidence. His record as a social worker and his being a student at the Technical Institute also went in his favour.[15]

Shortly after this Naren's last lingering ties with his family were finally snapped by the death of his widow mother in January 1908. The police had been after him since 1907; from the history sheet on him in the Police Archives it is known that in 1908 he visited Murshidabad to 'distribute alms to the famine-stricken people', he went also to Benaras, and there he stayed usually at the Jugantar Mess Boarding at 41 Champatolla. Other sources mention that during this period he was a frequent contributor to the periodicals and various publications of militant nationalists while maintaining the organization and activities of the small underground group at Changripota. The arrest of Aurobindo, Barin Ghose and their group in May, 1908 and the severe sentences passed on the accused (except on Aurobindo who was acquitted and who soon retired completely from political life to devote himself to spiritual meditation at Pondicherry) dealt a heavy blow to the revolutionary movement in Bengal. Naren, however, was not deterred by this development, and among political robberies he committed was one at Netra near Diamond Harbour on 23 April 1909 for which he was arrested, but he managed to obtain bail and absconded.

In January 1910 Naren was again arrested, this time together with 45 other revolutionaries, the principal accused being Jatindra Nath Mukherjee (1879–1915). The charge against them was that they had conspired 'to wage war against His Majesty the King Emperor and deprive the King Emperor of the sovereignty of British India and to overawe by means of criminal force the government of India'.[16] The trial lasted from July 1910 to April 1911, but Naren was discharged for lack of sufficient evidence. In prison he developed a strong and lasting attachment to Jatin Mukherjee and shortly after their release he set himself the task of unifying and reorganizing, under the leadership of Jatin, the scattered and fragmented underground revolutionary groups in Bengal.

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[15] History Sheet No. 687, Bengal File No. 205 of 1907; *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 11 December, 1907; S. R. Das, *Manabendranath* (Bengali), Calcutta, 1965, pp. 40–1; *Calcutta Weekly Notes*, Vol. V. p. 618 and Vol. XV pp. 569–97.

[16] *Calcutta Weekly Notes*, Vol. XV, ibid. J. C. Ker, *Political Trouble in India 1907–1917* (reprint), Calcutta, 1973, pp. 292–4; History Sheet No. 687.

There is a photograph of Naren (the earliest which is known to exist) which was taken by the police at the time of his arrest and trial in 1910. The thick wavy jetblack hair falling in abundant cascades on the well-built neck and shoulders, the long slender throat reaching the curled beard and whiskers, the strong chin and full lips framed by a dark moustache, the straight noble nose, but most striking of all, the high forehead and under it the large, pensive, magnetic eyes—it is a most remarkable portrait of a young visionary who refused to accept the established order as immutable and divinely ordained and who sought to overthrow it because his spirit was free. Such an impression on viewers could not quite obviously have been intended by his captors, but it is confirmed by other reports and recollections of his contemporaries which speak of him as a strict *brahmachari* (celibate), possessing a sharp intellect and a strong will, fearless and cool in highly dangerous situations, totally committed to the liberation of his motherland, very self-reliant and utterly indifferent to personal hardship, having no taste for domesticity or the conventional life of the Bengali *Bhadralok*.

The years between 1911 and 1913 were spent mainly in trying to revive and reorganize the fragmented groups of revolutionaries. During 1913 and 1914 several secret meetings were held and some kind of a consensus reached under which Jatin Mukherjee would be in command of the underground in Bengal with Naren as his chief lieutenant. The loose and informal federation of revolutionary groups came to be known as Jugantar. In August 1914 shortly after the outbreak of World War I, ten cases of arms and ammunitions were stolen by the revolutionaries from the customs office at Calcutta. Contacts were established with Indian revolutionary groups in South-East Asia, the United States and Germany. On 12 February 1915, Bird and Co. at Garden Reach was robbed of Rs. 18,000 in open daylight by Naren and his group to finance the plan of an insurrection. Naren was arrested on suspicion, released on bail, and then absconded. In March an emissary of the Indian Independence Committee at Berlin reached Calcutta bringing definite assurance of military-financial support of the German government to the revolutionaries in Bengal. In April Naren under the assumed name of Charles A. Martin went to Batavia to negotiate with the German Consul. From there he proceeded to Shanghai where the German Consul-General accepted his plan and agreed to arrange for the delivery of a cargo of 30,000 rifles with 400 rounds of ammunition each, at Raimangal in the Sunderbans. In June Naren returned to India to finalize plans; arrangements for unloading and distribution of arms were completed; details were worked out for simultaneous uprisings in Calcutta, East Bengal and Orissa; centres were set up for training cadres in signalling, telegraphy, codemaking and guerilla warfare. However, the promised arms did not arrive due to blunders committed by the captains of the tanker and the schooner which had been engaged by the Germans for this purpose. On 15 August Naren was again sent by Jatin to Batavia to re-negotiate with the Germans. Meantime, the police had discovered the plans of the revolutionaries; many were arrested; Jatin was surrounded in his hiding place near Balasore and wounded in the exchange of fire. He died in hospital.[17]

The Second Phase: from Indonesia to Mexico

As in 1908 the revolutionary movement in Bengal was again virtually crushed in 1915. Naren, however, continued to believe that with the help of arms from abroad it would be possible to revive and reorganize the movement. He proceeded to Japan and then to China where he negotiated with Sun Yat-Sen and the German ambassador for supply of arms. He was advised by the ambassador to go to Germany to get his plans approved by the Imperial General Staff. He then proceeded to the United States (which was still neutral) carrying with him a forged French-Indian passport showing him to be Charles A. Martin, a theology student from Pondicherry.

After ten months of highly hazardous travels under various names and disguises in Malaya, Indonesia, Indo-China, the Philippines, Japan, Korea and China, Naren reached San Francisco on 15 June 1916. The British police were after him and his arrival was flashed in the local daily. Naren immediately decamped to Pao Alto where he was provided temporary refuge by the younger brother of one of his revolutionary colleagues. Here he changed his name to Manabendra Nath Roy. His host Dhana Gopal Mukherjee introduced him to the President of Stanford University, Dr David Starr Jordan, who was a pacifist with a democratic socialist outlook, and to Evelyn Trent, a graduate student at Stanford. Jordan gave him an introduction to General Salvador Alvarado (1880–1924), progressive governor of the province of Yucatan in Mexico.

Evelyn Trent (20 October, 1892–21 November, 1970) was the youngest of the eight children of an engineer, Charles Trent of Auburn, California. As she told me many decades later, Roy struck her at their first meeting as a contemporary 'John the Baptist coming out of the wilderness', and she fell in love with him at first sight and decided almost at once to link her life with his. At twenty-four she was

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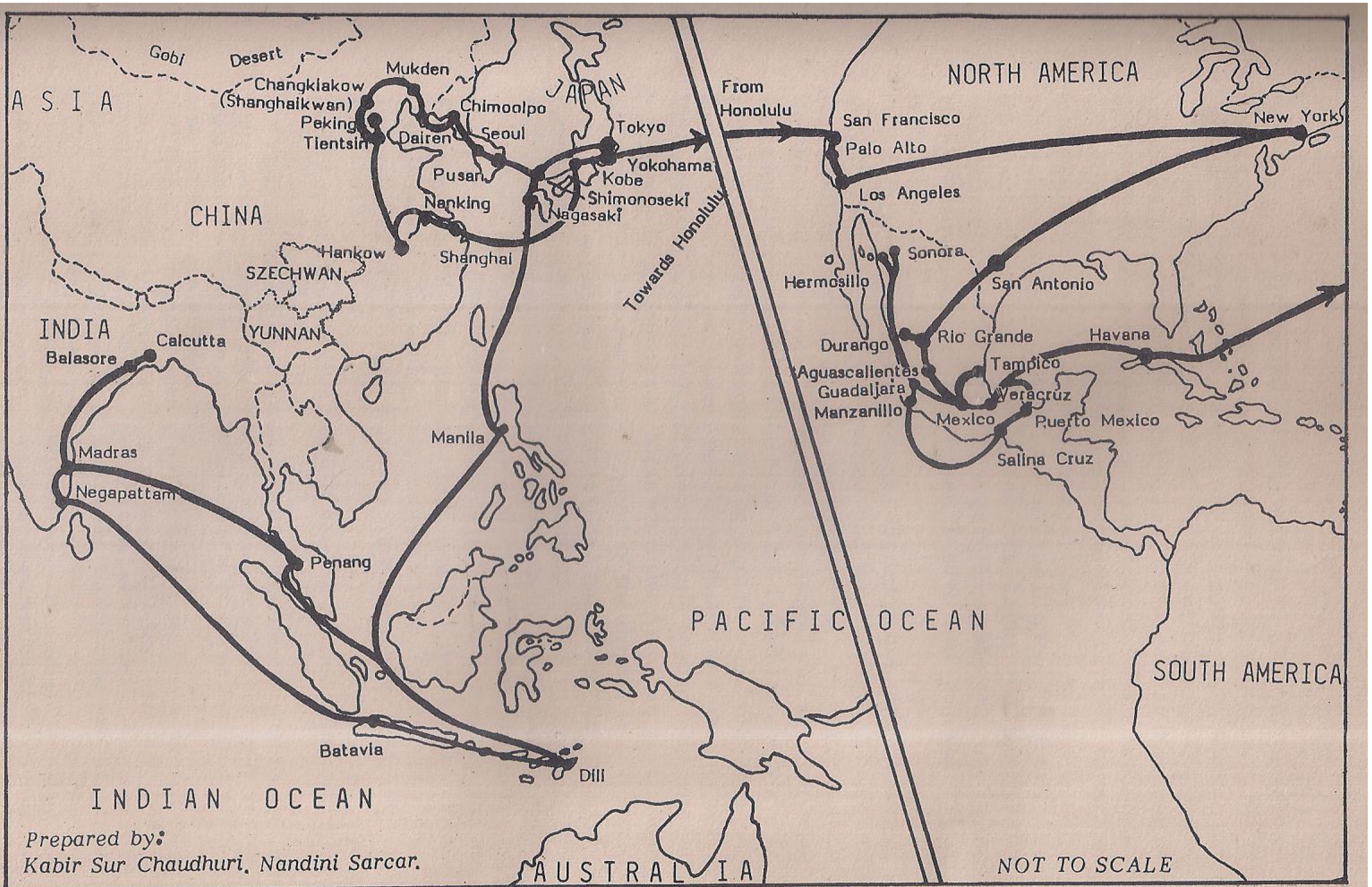
[17] W. Sealy, *Connections with the Revolutionary Organizations in Bihar and Orissa 1906–16*, Patna 1917; Govt. of Bengal, Political Department, *Memorandum on the History of Terrorism in Bengal 1905–1933;* Home, Political, 1917, Nos. 299–301; J. C. Ker, Ibid., pp. 248–59; *Sedition Committee Report,* Calcutta, 1918, pp. 120–5.


Gobi
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YUNNAN
INDIA
Calcutta
Balasore
Madras
Negapattam
Penang
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Batavia
Dili
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Nagasaki
Towards Honolulu
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PACIFIC OCEAN
SOUTH AMERICA
AUSTRALIA
NOT TO SCALE

Prepared by:
Kabir Sur Chaudhuri, Nandini Sarcar.

M. N. Roy's movements 1915–1919
India · Malaysia · Indonesia · Philippines · Japan · Korea · China · Japan · United States · Mexico · to Europe.

already a passionate radical in her views and she found in this revolutionary from a strange land—'tall, with long, slim, expressive hands and black-white eyes that flashed frequent wrath out of a dark face' (as Carleton Beals would describe him two years later at Mexico in his book *Glass Houses*, Philadelphia, 1938, p. 44)—the embodiment of her romantic ideals and progressive aspirations. When in October 1916 Roy moved from the West Coast to New York she went with him against the wishes of her father and family, and shortly afterwards they got married. At New York, the Roys were befriended by the well-known nationalist leader Lala Lajpat Rai (1865–1928) who later noted in his private memorandum: 'the only one of the Bengali revolutionaries for whom I have had genuine respect is M. N. Roy'.[18]

The Indian revolutionaries in the United States were, however, very divided and poorly organized, and Roy received no assistance from them in pursuing his plan to go to Germany. However, both in the West and East Coasts he formed friendships with several American radicals; he frequented the New York Public Library where he came across socialist literature; and he went to public meetings with Lajpat Rai where questions from the working-class audience made him wonder if exploitation and poverty would cease in India with the attainment of independence. Meanwhile the American government had decided to join the war in support of the British. In March and April, 1917 a number of Indian revolutionaries together with their German contacts in the U.S. were arrested.[19] Roy too was arrested and questioned but the details of his revolutionary activities in India and the Far East were not known to the New York police, and so he was released with a warning. On 6 April the U.S. declared war on Germany. Shortly after this Roy addressed on 'Open Letter to President Wilson'.[20] To avoid arrest and extradition Roy, together with Evelyn, fled the United States in May and reached Mexico on June, 1917.

Roy spent the next two and half years in Mexico from where he continued to communicate with his associates in the U.S., often using the cover name Manuel Mendez. Shortly after his arrival he was contacted by the Germans and he made a final attempt to arrange transportation of arms to the revolutionary underground in Bengal. He decided to go again to China, but the Japanese boat which the Germans had agreed to provide to take him across the seas failed to arrive. Nor was any transport available during the war to take him to Germany. In the circumstances he had no alternative except to stay in Mexico and do what he could for the cause of Indian Independence. He learnt Spanish, wrote and published several books and pamphlets on India in that language, contributed to journals like *El Pueblo*, gave lectures at the Mexico University at the invitation of its rector, Maestro Casas, made friends with American radicals and draft-dodgers (or 'slackers' as they were called) in the city, established contacts with local socialist groups, and even succeeded in winning the personal friendship and confidence of the then President of Mexico, Venustiano Carranza.[21]

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[18] Lajpat Rai, *Autobiographical Writings*, (ed.) V. C. Joshi, Delhi and Jullundur, 1965, p. 218. I met Evelyn Trent in 1957–8 with an introduction from Ellen Roy, and to her I owe some of the details included in my serialized 'Life of M. N. Roy' in *The Radical Humanist*, August 1985 and the following issues.

[19] There is a stenographic report of the 'Hindu Conspiracy Case' in the India Office Library, London, 'USA vs. Franz Bopp and others', MSS Eur C. 138, Vols. 1–40 and 61–75. *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 9 May 1917 to 12 June 1918 gave a full coverage of the trial. Also see E. E. Sperry and W. M. West, *German Plots and Intrigues in the U.S. during the period of our Neutrality*, Washington, 1918.

[20] Although *M. N. Roy's Memoirs*, Bombay, 1964, p. 29, stated that the 'Open Letter' was written before America joined the war, the introduction to its Spanish version included in *La Voz de la India* leaves no doubt that it was composed shortly after the event.

Among Roy's earliest Spanish publications from Mexico was his translation of the open letter to President Wilson. This was included in the book *La Voz de la India*, the other book being *La India Su Pasado Su Presente Su Porvenir*, both published in 1918. They are fully representative of the revolutionary nationalist phase in his intellectual development. In less than a year after their arrival the Roys had thus established themselves in Mexico as revolutionary intellectuals of some eminence: their house in Colonia Roma became an important meeting place and refuge for radicals and socialists. Soon they became involved in the political developments of the land.

These were the years of the 'Epic Revolution' in Mexico. After nearly three centuries of Spanish colonial rule Mexico had achieved independence in 1821, but in 1876 it fell under the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz which lasted until 1911. Diaz was overthrown by Francisco Madero but before the latter could establish a stable democratic system he was assassinated by General Huerta in February 1913. Then began a struggle for power which saw the emergence of Venustiano Carranza, who had been a supporter of Madero, and who now tried to provide Mexico with a stable constitutional government. In December 1916 he called a Constitutional Convention at the city of

[21] The most detailed account of Roy's years in Mexico are to be found in his *Memoirs*. Also see Carleton Beals, *Glass Houses*, Philadelphia, 1938, Chapter IV; Manuel Gomez (assumed name of Charles Phillips), 'From Mexico to Moscow', *Survey*, October 1964; U.S. War Department Files 10640–690 M.I.5 'M. N. Roy's Activities in Mexico'. On Carranza, B. Ulloa, *Revolution Mexicana 1910–20*, Mexico, 1963; B. M. Brito, *Carranza, his Friends, his Enemies*, Mexico 1935; J. V. Estanol, *Carranza and his Bolshevik Regime*, Los Angeles, 1920. The last work is very hostile to Carranza.

Queretaro. The new constitution which became the law of the land on 5 February, 1917, guaranteed civil and political rights and liberties to all citizens, committed the government to secular education, put restrictions on Church ownership of real estate and abolished all privileges and special powers of the Church, voided all previously granted concessions to foreign companies and investors, provided for the liquidation of the *Latifundia* and for redistribution of land among the actual cultivators, and incorporated what came to be called the Magna Carta of Mexican Labour—eight-hour day, minimum wage, abolition of *peonage*, and the right of the wage earners to organize unions and to strike.[22] However, these were declarations of principles which raised expectations which were hard to fulfil. Though Carranza's government had been recognized in 1915 by the United States and the 1917 Constitution confirmed Carranza as the President of the Republic, his position was never secure, threatened as it was by powerful enemies from many sides—the foreign investors and the British and the American governments, the Catholic church, the *haciendados* or big landowners, the ambitious generals and provincial governors, bandit chiefs and leaders of peasant rebellion, and those militant radicals who were impatient with his policy of moderation.[23]

The Roys arrived four months after the adoption of the Queretaro Constitution. After the failure of his efforts to bring arms from abroad to the revolutionaries in India, Roy decided to devote himself to the cause of freedom and social justice in his host country. Initially his motivation was to promote anti-Americanism in Mexico so that the presence of a hostile hinterland would force the U.S. to divert some of its resources from the allied battlefronts in Europe, but soon it deepened into a positive and lasting love for the Mexican people. He tried to bring together the fragmented and ineffective 'left' groups and trade unions into a strong and unified organization, and used his personal friendship with the President to impress on him the need of an effective programme of legislation for the protection of labour, particularly against exploitation by foreign capital. With what was left over from the funds provided by the Germans shortly after his arrival in Mexico he bought the small socialist group in Mexico city a printing press so that its organ *Lucha de Clases* could be converted into a regular weekly of eight pages. He also financed the publication *El Socialista* edited by Francisco Cervantes Lopez.[24] He drafted a manifesto, and supported by socialist leaders like Don Manuel, Santibanez, Plutarco Calles (a future President of Mexico), Francisco Lopez and Jose Allen, the fraternity of slackers which included Charles philips (alias Frank Seaman, Manuel Gomez etc.) and Irwin Granwich (alias Mike Gold), and intellectuals like Rector Casas of Mexico University, he called the first national congress of the socialists of Mexico. The Congress met at the National Theatre, Dolores Street, Mexico city from 25 August to 4 September 1919, adopted a constitution and founded El Partido Socialista de Mexico. There were fraternal delegates from Argentina, Peru and Colombia. Roy, *al companero Indio*, was the moving spirit of the Congress. Prior to the Congress he had been elected General Secretary of the Socialist Party at a Conference held in December 1918. At the Congress the Roys were elected members of the National Committee while Jose Allen was elected the new General Secretary and Francesco Lopez as International Secretary. At the Congress there was some conflict between Roy and Linn Gale, a draft-dodger from New York, who published a journal named *Gale's Magazine* and combined militant leftism with spiritualism and astrology. However, Roy had the support of the majority and, while Jose Allen was formally the General Secretary, the newly founded party was virtually run by Roy.

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[22] C. C. Cumberland, *Mexico—the Struggle for Modernity*; H. B. Parkes, *A History of Mexico*. Anita Brenner, *The wind that swept Mexico*; W. H. Callcott, *Liberalism in Mexico 1857–1929*, Stanford, 1931; F. R. Garcia (ed.), *Diario de los debates del Congresso Constituyente*, 2 Vols., Mexico 1922.

[23] Ronald Atkin, *Revolution: Mexico 1910–1920*, London, 1969; Victor Alba, *The Mexicans: the Making of a Nation*, London, 1967; H. F. Cline, *The United States and Mexico*, Harvard, 1953; C. W. Hacket, *The Mexican Revolution and the United States*, Boston, 1926; E. Galzrza, *The Roman Catholic Church as a Factor in the Political and Social History of Mexico*, Sacramento, 1928.

At this point there arrived in Mexico city Michael Borodin (original name Mikhail Markovich Gruzenberg 1884–1952), an emissary of the Communist International which had its Foundation Congress in Moscow in March 1919. Borodin arrived pennyless, but he quickly found out about Roy from reading the daily *El Heraldo de Mexico* which had been started by General Alvarado and which had an English section edited by Charles Philips in collaboration with M. N. Roy and others. Roy had, in fact, published in *El Heraldo* a series of articles attacking the imperialist policy and conduct of the United States towards the countries of Latin America. Borodin contacted Roy who generously gave him hospitality and monetary help and introduced him to President Carranza. Roy and Borodin quickly became very close friends, and the former who had already moved from revolutionary nationalism to socialism found in the latter a very able mentor who explained to him the intricacies of the theory and practice of Marxism. After a great deal of discussion it was decided that the newly founded Socialist Party would be asked to approve the Manifesto of the First Congress of the Communist International and to convert itself into the Communist Party of Mexico. An extraordinary meeting of the Socialist Party was called, where with majority support the party renamed itself as El Partido Communista de Mexico in November, 1919. Roy's opponent, the American 'slacker' Linn Gale split off and formed a separate communist party, but it was the party founded by Roy which was given official recognition by the Comintern. Roy was personally invited to Moscow by Lenin, and left with Evelyn in December 1919 on board the transoceanic liner Alfonso XIII carrying Mexican diplomatic passports with their names given as Senor and Senora Roberta Alleny Villa Garcia.[25]

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[24] M .N. Roy's *Memoirs*, pp. 78, 131. Linn Gale, though very hostile to Roy, mentioned that Roy financed Lopez's *El Socialista*, *Gale's Magazine*, Vol. III, September 1919. According to the Director of Criminal Intelligence Roy also started the journal *El Communista* which ceased publication after his departure from Mexico. (Home Pol. Dep. No. 103, April 1920). According to Harry Bernstein, 'Marxismo en Mexico 1917–25', *Historia Mexicana*, 1958, *El Communista* was run by Linn Gale.

The years in Mexico wrought significant changes and developments in Roy. He moved from militant nationalism through socialism to Marxism in the last year of his stay. Although he was still being chased by the British Secret Service, he was no longer simply a daring organizer of the underground but a revolutionary wise in the ways of the world, respected alike by a President and a university rector and admired by radical intellectuals and trade unionists. He had a gifted wife who shared his ideas and who made his home a hospitable meeting-place of statesmen and political exiles. Here he developed a taste for Western culture, especially its music, literature and philosophy. The authorship of the books and essays in Spanish and English marked the beginning of that intellectual eminence which would distinguish him as a Marxist in the 1920s and as a radical humanist in his later years. In Mexico, besides acquiring fluency in Spanish, he also took lessons in German and French. India was and would always remain his main concern, but Mexico gave to his outlook and sympathies a strong cosmopolitan orientation. In India insecurity and hardship were his constant companions. Mexico taught him to 'appreciate the good things of life', but did not weaken his resolve and readiness to risk every personal gain and comfort for what he believed to be the right 'cause'.

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[25] Roy's *Memoirs* pp. 176–223; Gomez, 'From Mexico to Moscow'; Beals, *Glass Houses*. According to Gomez, Borodin's assumed name in Mexico was Alexandrescu. There is a sketch of Borodin in Clare Sheridan, *Russian Portraits*, London 1921. Dan J. Jacobs has published a biography, *Borodin: Stalin's Man in China*, Harvard, 1981. For socialism and communism in Mexico, Rollie E. Poppino, *International Communism in Latin America, 1917–1963*, New York, 1964; Ramon E. Ruiz, *Labour and the Ambivalent Revolutionaries Mexico 1911–1923*, Baltimore, 1976; Stanley Ross, *Communism in Latin America*, New York, 1947; Donald L. Herman, *The Comintern in Mexico*, Washington 1974. There is a detailed but very heavily biased account of the Socialist Congress in *Gale's Magazine*, Vol. 3, No. 2, September 1919.

The Third Phase: in the Comintern

After twelve days of transoceanic voyage the Roys got off at Santander in Spain, met several socialist leaders in Madrid and Barcelona, and then reached Berlin via Milan and Zurich. In Berlin where they had to wait for four months they won the personal friendship of several leading Marxists, especially August Thalheimer and Heinrich Brandler, who were disciples of the assassinated Spartacist leader Rosa Luxemburg (1870–1919) and who were themselves two of the founders of the Communist Party of Germany. Roy also met some old time Marxists and Revisionists like Eduard Bernstein (1850–1932), Karl Kautsky (1854–1938) and Rudolf Hilferding (1877–1941), and familiarized himself with the Dutch Group of Communists. He reached Moscow early in May 1920, and at Lenin's invitation drafted and submitted to the Second Congress of the Comintern (19 July–7 August, 1920) his own Supplementary Theses to Lenin's Theses on The National and Colonial Questions. With some modifications both sets of theses were adopted by the Congress, but the differences in approach and assessment were not really resolved, and they have continued to haunt the communist movement for more than the last sixty years.

Briefly stated, Roy's main points in his Supplementary Theses were: (*a*) a revolution in Europe depended on the course of the revolution in Asia bringing about the break-up of the colonial empires; (*b*) in the colonies, especially India, there were two movements, one bourgeois democratic, limited to the middle classes, which sought compromise with the existing order, the other a mass movement which represented the exploited majority for whom political independence to be achieved and made meaningful required at the same time a social and economic revolution; and (*c*) the Comintern should support revolutionary mass movements and not the colonial middle class movements and leaderships. Roy pleaded for the Comintern's commitment to the principle of 'revolution from below'.[26] Lenin's Eurocentric view rejected the notion of the dependence of revolution in Europe on revolutions in Asia. He also held that the colonial bourgeoisie had some revolutionary potential and that communists should support bourgeois democratic movements in the colonies. In the theses adopted by the

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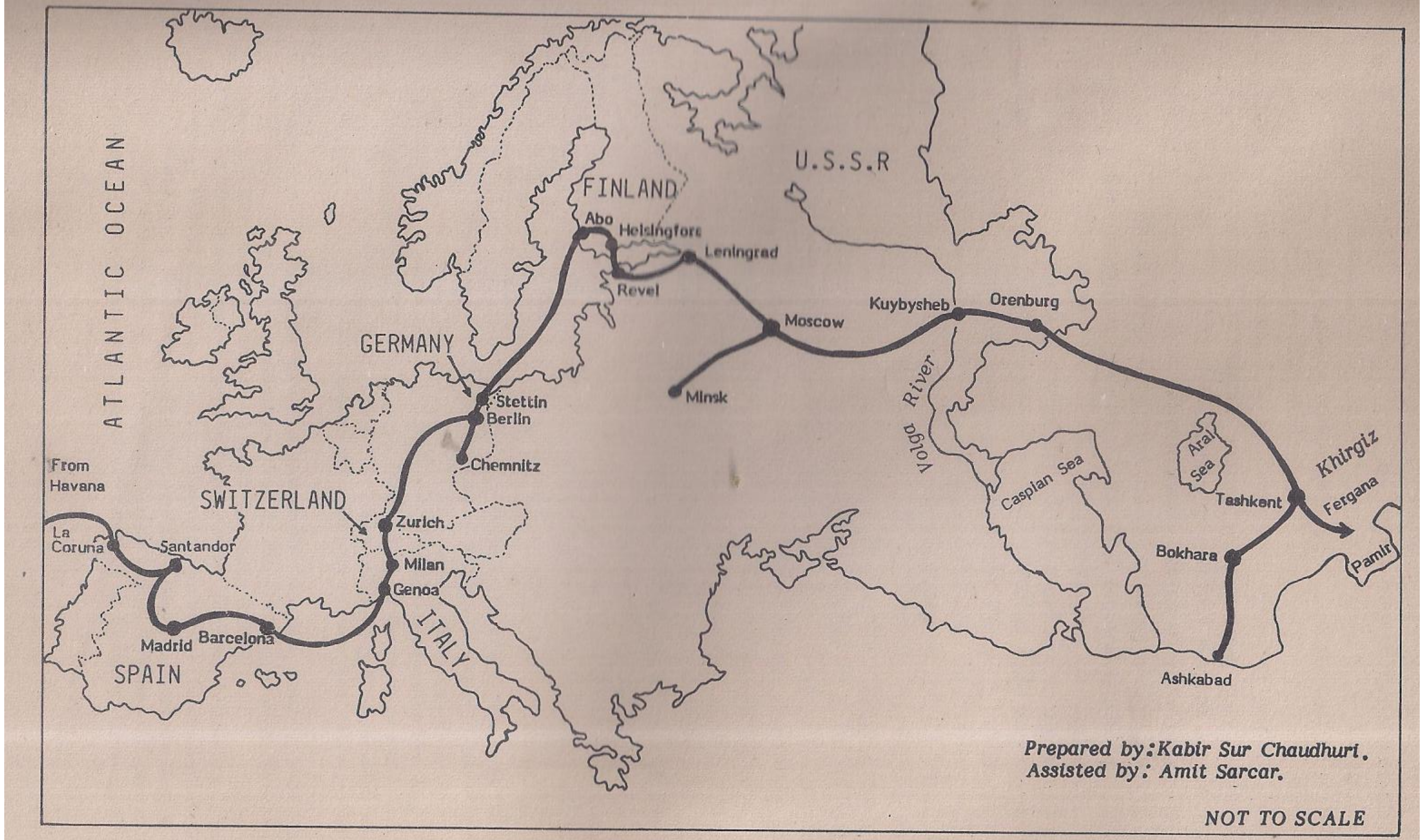
[26] Roy's position at the Second Congress has been discussed extensively by scholars and critics. Among scholarly interpretations see R. C. North 'M. N. Roy and the Revolution in Asia' in *Soviet Survey*, April–June, 1960; J. P. Haithcox, 'The Roy-Lenin Debate on Colonial Policy: A New Interpretation', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 1963, XXIII, 1; Claude Hamel, 'Un Débat au Second Congres du Komintern', *Est et Ouest*, XIV, 1962. For official communist criticism, G. Adhikari (ed.), *Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India*, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1971, and more recently R. A. Ulyanovsky (ed.), *The Comintern and the East*.


ATLANTIC OCEAN
U.S.S.R
FINLAND
GERMANY
SWITZERLAND
ITALY
SPAIN
From Havana
La Coruna
Santandor
Madrid
Barcelona
Genoa
Milan
Zurich
Chemnitz
Berlin
Stettin
Abo
Helsingfors
Revel
Leningrad
Moscow
Minsk
Kuybysheb
Orenburg
Volga River
Caspian Sea
Aral Sea
Tashkent
Khirgiz
Fergana
Pamir
Bokhara
Ashkabad

Prepared by: Kabir Sur Chaudhuri.
Assisted by: Amit Sarcar.

NOT TO SCALE

M. N. Roy's movements in 1920

Spain · Italy · Switzerland · Germany · Finland · Soviet Union · Leningrad · Moscow · Leningrad · Moscow · Minsk · Moscow · Kuybysheb · Orenburg · the Khirgiz steppes · Tashkent · Fergana · the Pamirs · Tashkent · Bokhara · Ashkabad · Tashkent · Moscow.

Congress Lenin conceded to Roy by substituting in his own draft the term 'national-revolutionary' for the term 'bourgeois-democratic'.[27] Roy's draft was also amended, the main change being deletion or watering down of passages which declared the dependence of revolutions on Europe on revolutions in Asia.

At the Plenary session while Lenin's theses were adopted with three abstentions. Roy's theses were adopted unanimously.[28] The deliberations of the Second Congress established Roy as a principal Marxist theorist on Asia. Immediately afterwards he and Evelyn went to Tashkent where they tried to raise an army of liberation from the Muslim *muhajiran* (pilgrims) who had crossed from India into Afghanistan in the wake of the Khilafat movement. An Indian Military School (Induski Kurs) was started there and the formation of an emigré Communist Party of India on 17 October 1920 was reported to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkestan by Roy as Secretary-in-charge, Turkestan Bureau. In February the Roys returned to Moscow. After the founding of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East (KUTV) on 21 April 1921, the Roys taught there briefly but he soon had a too rapidly growing programme of activities to have much time for KUTV.[29] In the Eastern Commission of the Third Congress (22 June–12 July 1921) of the Comintern Roy again presented a set of draft theses explaining his view. However, the Comintern leadership's continued Eurocentrism disappointed him and he decided to develop his Marxist analysis of contemporary India in the form of a full-length monograph. The text of *India in Transition* was completed in October and sections from it published in the Comintern's multilingual journal, *Communist International*, in December. In 1922 the book appeared in Russian, English and German, and won almost instantaneous recognition as a major Marxist classic.

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[27] For Lenin's 'Preliminary Draft Theses', his *Selected Works*, Vol. X, New York, 1938, and for the amended Theses, *Theses and Statutes of the Third (Communist) International*, Moscow 1920. In 1975 Peking brought out *Lenin on the National and Colonial Questions* which included his 1916 Theses on 'the Right of Nations to Self-Determination', his 1920 'Preliminary Draft' and his 'Report of the Commission on the National and Colonial Question'. In my serialized 'Life' of Roy I have discussed in some detail the differences between Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg on the nationality question and Rosa's probable influence on Roy's thinking.

[28] *The Second Congress of the Communist International Proceedings*, Moscow, 1920; Jane Degras (ed.), *The Communist International*, Vol. 1, 1919–1922, pp. 138–9; *Der Zweite Kongress der Kommunist Internationale: Protokoll*, Hamburg, 1921.

[29] For KUTV, Abdul Quadir Khan, 'Pupil of the Soviet', *The Times*, London, 25, 26 and 27 February 1930; A. C. Freeman, 'Russia's University of Oriental Communists', *Soviet Russia Pictorial*, New York, April, 1923; Qurban, 'The Eastern University in Moscow', *The Vanguard*, Vol. II, No. 4, 1 April 1923; Branko Lazitch, 'Les écoles de cadres du Comintern' in J. Freymond (ed.), *Contributions a'histoire du Comintern*, Geneva, 1965.

Meanwhile Roy had drawn up (August 1921) a 'Manifesto to the 36th Indian National Congress at Ahmedabad' and sent bundles of printed copies to India with his emissary, Nalini Gupta, in September. He had moved to Berlin where he set up his headquarters. On 15 May 1922 he published the first issue of his journal *The Vanguard of Indian Independence* which, under changing names and with varying periodicity, would continue to appear under his editorship till April 1928, and to serve as the main source of guidance and inspiration to communists and other radically inclined groups and persons in India during the 1920s. By the end of 1922 Roy had succeeded through his writings, correspondence and emissaries in forming small communist groups in Bengal, Bombay, Madras, the United Provinces and the Punjab. He now wrote to them proposing formation of an underground Communist Party of India, and a legal 'revolutionary mass party' to include the 'left wing' of the Congress, the Trade Union Movement and the oppressed peasantry. *The Vanguard* had been banned by the Government of India in September and had changed its name to *The Advance-Guard*. In the issue of 1 December he published a 'Programme for the Indian National Congress' ("Complete Independence", "Election of a National Assembly by Universal Suffrage", "Establishment of a Federated Republic of India", "Abolition of Landlordism", "Free and Compulsory Education", etc.) which received very wide publicity in India, but the journal was banned by the Government, and from the issue of 15 February 1923, it was renamed *The Vanguard*. It continued as a fortnightly till it was changed to a monthly under a new name, *The Masses of India*, in January 1925.

At the Fourth Congress of the Comintern (5 November–5 December 1922) Roy became a candidate member of the Executive Committee (ECCI) and his views on the Eastern Question were upheld. In the next few years his rise in the Comintern hierarchy was remarkably rapid. At the Fifth Congress (26 June–8 July 1924) he was elected full member of the ECCI and candidate member of the Presidium; his view on the National and Eastern Question, though strongly opposed by D. Z. Manuilsky, received Stalin's support.[30] At the Sixth Plenum of the Comintern Executive (February–March 1926) Roy was elected to the Presidium as a full member, and made a member of the Comintern Secretariat and the Orgbureau. He was also appointed to the editorial board of the Communist International and named Chairman of the Eastern Commission. At the Seventh Plenum (November–December 1926), besides continuing to occupy these high and powerful positions, he was also elected member-secretary of the Chinese Commission.[31]

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[30] Confirmation is provided by the official Moscow publication R. A. Ulyanovsky (ed.), The Comintern and the East, 1979, pp. 169–70. Also *Fifth Congress of the Communist International*, (London, 1924); Jane Degras, (ed.) *The Communist International*, Vol. II, pp. 156–59.

Meanwhile besides publishing regularly his own journal and contributing to various organs of the Comintern like the *Inprecor* and the *Communist International*, Roy had written and brought out several books: *What do we want* (August 1922), *One year of Non-Cooperation from Ahmedabad to Gaya* (with Evelyn Roy, June 1923), *Political Letters* (January 1924), *The Aftermath of Non-Cooperation* (February 1926), and *The Future of Indian Politics* (June–July 1926). The last book, which became, after *India in Transition*, another important landmark in the development of Marxist interpretation of contemporary India, was published simultaneously in German and Russian.

In January 1924 Roy was expelled from Berlin by the German Government. He moved his headquarters to Zurich, then to Annecy in France and from there to Paris. But in January 1924 he was expelled also from Paris.[32] He had again to move secretly from one European city to another, writing and editing, arranging the printing and despatch of his many publications to various contacts in India, attending to his Comintern duties and responsibilities in Moscow and engaging in theoretical and tactical debates, controversies and manoeuvres. In India a case had in the meanwhile been started by the Government in February 1924 at Kanpur, charging him and such people as he had been able to convert to Communism, with conspiracy to establish a branch of the Comintern in India and to 'deprive the King-emperor of his sovereignty of British India'. Roy was the principal accused in the Kanpur conspiracy case, but since he was abroad a warrant for his arrest was issued by the District Magistrate which would become the basis for his arrest seven years later. Soon after the end of the Kanpur Case, efforts were undertaken to establish a Communist Party of India within the country. The Party was formed officially at a conference in Kanpur in December, 1925.

Roy wanted to return to India so that he could organize from within what he had been trying to organize from outside, and on 21 February 1924, he had addressed a letter from Zurich to Ramsay Macdonald, Prime Minister of the Labour Government in Great Britain, seeking removal of the ban on his journal and 'permission to return to India without becoming the object of persecution for alleged offences committed in the past'. The official response was to institute the Kanpur Case. In view of the newly issued warrant the Comintern leadership decided against his going to India. Some time after his expulsion from Paris Roy succeeded in re-establishing a Centre in Berlin, while having other Centres in Amsterdam, Zurich and Paris. By temperament and training a hard-working person, his time was fully stretched among his many responsibilities and functions—as editor, author, member of the Comintern Executive, Secretariat, Orgbureau and several committees and commissions, and organizer of a revolutionary movement in India.

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[31] *Inprecor*, VI (1926), 12, 17, 83, 93.

[32] *The Masses of India*, Vol. 1, Nos. 2–3, February-March, 1925, 'France and Indian Revolutionaries', which also included Roy's letters to the Minister of the Interior of the French Republic and to the League of the Rights of Man and of Citizens, both written from Luxembourg, dated 1 February 1925.

But while his position within the Comintern continued to be quite high and the influence of his writings on radical forces in India and several other Asian countries was considerable, he was certainly not without enemies, rivals or opponents within and outside the movement. In the Comintern leadership Bukharin proved to be a good and steadfast friend and Stalin backed his views at the critical Fifth Congress, but Karl Radek (who was a proponent of 'national bolshevism') was opposed to his 'left wing' ideas, and his relations with the Comintern President Zinoviev was never particularly cordial. But far more serious was the hostility of some of the very powerful members of the *apparatchiki* like Piatnitsky, Kuusinen and Manuilsky who disliked him for his intellectual eminence and independence of thinking and on whom Stalin relied heavily as his own henchmen in the rapidly sharpening struggle for power with Trotsky and his other rivals in the party leadership. Besides, the leaders of the otherwise very ineffective Communist Party of Great Britain presumed that India being a part of the British Empire, the communist movement in the colony would naturally come within the domain of their influence. Roy's criticism of the British working class and its leaders for their failure to take an unambiguously anti-colonial stand was not particularly appreciated by the communist leaders in England some of whom tried to undermine his authority and bring the newly formed Communist Party of India under their influence and control. In September 1925 the Comintern's Colonial Bureau constituted a Foreign Bureau of the CIP headed by Roy but which also included Clemens Dutt of the Communist Party of Great Britain. In the following years the CPGB tried to establish its jurisdiction over the Indian movement by sending emissaries and instructions. Dutt's personal relations with Roy were friendly, but there were others in the British leadership who were jealous of his position and who tried to take advantage of the power struggle in the Soviet Union and the Comintern in the late 1920s and Roy's absence from Europe during the first eight months of 1927 (when the latter was in China) to influence the *apparatchiki* against him and gain control of the young and inexperienced Communist Party of India.

Another source of trouble was the group of Indian revolutionaries in exile who, after Germany's defeat in the war, turned to Russia for support and patronage, but who had little interest in Marxism as an ideological alternative to militant nationalism. The leader of this group, Virendra Nath Chattopadhyay (1880–1937), was a person of ability and dedication, but he was no theorist or intellectual. His *de facto* wife at this time, Agnes Smedley (1892–1950), had known the Roys briefly in the United States. From the fictitious account given in her autobiographical novel, *Daughter of Earth*, and from the brief mention of her in Roy's *Memoirs*, it is clear that Roy and Smedley took a strong dislike to each other, and in Berlin Agnes Smedley poisoned Chattopadhyay's mind against his younger contemporary who nevertheless held Virendra in good regard. The Berlin group presumed that Lenin's theses at the Second Congress would favour them against Roy, but as long as Lenin was in full control of developments in the Soviet union and the Comintern, this group received very little encouragement from him.[33] An associate of Roy, Abani Mukherji (1891–1937), who had collaborated with him on the book *India in Transition*, turned against him in 1922, and with encouragement from the Berlin group, worked persistently and hard to malign him in India.[34] The intelligence service in India which kept intercepting the letters, instructions, moneys and publications sent by Roy also did everything possible to promote misunderstanding and distrust between Roy and his contacts in India. Roy thus had many forces to contened with, which did not allow him to take things easy ever at the height of his intellectual eminence and organizational authority within the Comintern.

But his most serious problems during the 1920s would seem to be rooted in the peculiar nature of the relationship between the Comintern and the Soviet State, and the unresolved contradictions and consequent shifts and ambiguities in the Comintern's policies and behaviour. Founded by the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party in March 1919 and completely dependent on the Soviet State for its finances, authority and survival, the Comintern could not but be dominated by the Russian leaders and their nominees. Formulation of its strategy and tactics had to give the highest priority to the national interest of the Soviet State. At the same time its proclaimed commitment to the goal of communist revolution as envisioned in the *Communist Manifesto* and the declaration in its Platform that it would 'subordinate so-called national interests to the interests of the international revolution', brought into it various groups and individuals from other countries. They, while acknowledging the leadership of the Soviet State, wanted nevertheless to retain their independence of judgement and right of participation in the decision-making process and to obtain from the Comintern, support for policies which favoured revolution in the peculiar setting of their respective countries.

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[33] The Communist Party of India has persistently tried to highlight the Berlin group, but neither the late G. Adhikari *Documents* nor such Soviet scholars as A. Reznikov *The Comintern and the East*, 1984 or M. A. Persits *Revolutionaries of India in Soviet Russia*, Moscow 1983 have come up with any evidence that Lenin gave importance to the Berlin group or to the views of its members.

[34] For Abani Mukherji, see Cecil Kaye, *Communism in India*, (ed. Subodh Roy), Calcutta 1971 (Reprint), pp. 312–19. For conflicting accounts and assessments of Mukherji by rival leaders of the CPI and the CPI (Marxist), see Adhikari, *Documents* Vol. I. and Muzaffar Ahmad, *Myself and the Communist Party of India 1920–1929*, Calcutta, 1970.

Prior to what has since been called 'Stalinization' (which was accomplished between 1928 and 1938), the Comintern allowed divisions and open debates, and its policy formulations were often characterized by attempted reconciliation of different, sometimes even opposite points of view.[35] In Roy's case his stress on the dependence of revolutions in Europe on revolutions in Asia never found clear support from the Russians; at the Third Congress he had, in fact, to remonstrate openly at the closing session that the Eastern Question had been grossly neglected by the Executive.[36] More important, his analysis of developments in colonial and semi-colonial countries and his strategy of 'revolution from below' were not favoured by the *apparatchiki* who considered supporting the 'nationalist' leadership more realistic and more in consonance with the interests of the Soviet State. They invoked Lenin's Theses at the Second Congress in support of their own view (which was determined more by considerations of *Realpolitik* than by Marxist analysis).

However, Lenin's unconcealed admiration for Roy and generous sponsorship of the latter's Theses as supplementary to his own, Roy's uncommon intrepidity, vigour, intelligence and industry, his very impressive record as a Marxist theorist (as evidenced by his books and pamphlets, his journal and his various contributions to the Comintern Press) and as a political organizer had stood him in good stead earlier, later, the support given to his views by Stalin at the time of the Fifth Congress (when the draft resolution on the National and Colonial question drawn by the ECCI was not endorsed because Stalin explicitly agreed with Roy against Manuilsky and other members,) the friendship and respect which Roy enjoyed in his relationship with Bukharin and with several leaders of the Communist parties of Germany and Netherlands, and the divisions and conflicts within the Comintern and among the Russian leaders themselves—all these factors allowed him considerable freedom to propagate and argue in support of his own analyses and strategy, while occupying a high position in the Comintern apparatus. He advocated simultaneous formation of a Workers' and Peasants' party which would provide legal cover to the Communist Party of India and of 'a revolutionary nationalist party' or a People's Party which would develop out of the left wing of the Congress which had now a popular base but a compromising and conservative leadership. His programme was that of an agrarian democratic revolution to be brought about by the combined forces of the workers, peasants and the radicalized sections of the lower middle class. However, he had to be cautious as many in the top leadership of the Soviet State and the Comintern were keen on having good relations with the established power elites of such nationalist organizations as the Kuomintang in China and the Congress in India, and the powerful *apparatchiki* did not at all share his revolutionary vision or enthusiasm. The official policy continued to be ambivalent trying to combine 'revolution from below' with 'revolution from above', but the danger was always there of his being charged with 'deviation' and being made a scapegoat should such action be required by considerations of *Realpolitik*. In his writings his position remained consistent and clear; but he had to be constantly watchful to retain his authority and independence in a situation rife with internal struggles and positional shifts.

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[35] Franz Borkenau, *World Communism;* E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, Vol. 3; Jane Degras, *The Communist International* Vols. I and II. Also *Protokolls* of Komintern Kongresses.

[36] *Protokoll des III Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale*, Hamburg, 1921, p. 1018; *III Kongress Kominterna*, Moscow, 1921. At the Third Congress Trotsky publicly accepted Roy's criticism of his major speech on the 'World Economic Crisis'. Leon Trotsky, *The First Five years of the Communist International*, Vol. I, New York, 1945, pp. 236–37.

During 1924 and 1925 Roy was frequently on the move, having been expelled first from Berlin and then from Paris. He had hardly any kind of a regular domestic life. Late in 1925 or early in 1926 his wife Evelyn left Europe and returned to her homeland, the United States. The exact date of her departure or the reasons for her decision are not known, but I gathered from her personally in 1957 that the parting was friendly though, at least on her part, it was also quite sad. Roy did not mention her in his *Memoirs* since any recollection of her communist past would have caused her much harassment in the United States, but she retained to the end her admiration for Roy and her interest in his writings and activities.

At the Seventh Plenum of the ECCI (November-December 1926) Zinoviev was removed from his post as Comintern President. Roy was re-elected to the Presidium and the Secretariat and he and Petrov were appointed member-secretaries of the Chinese Commission. In China the relations between the Kuomintang and the Communist

Party had reached a highly critical stage. In March, 1926 Chiang Kai-Shek had struck out against the Communists and his Russian advisers in Canton, and although the dispute had been temporarily patched up, Chiang's hostility was unconcealed. The Seventh Plenum decided to send Roy as the head of a Comintern delegation to China. He had been to China in 1915–16 and was one of the top experts of the Comintern on Asia. The Theses which the Seventh Plenum adopted and which were intended to guide the Chinese Communist Party, however, contained contradictory directives. On one side they stressed the crucial importance of the programme of agrarian revolution and the transformation of the Kuomintang into 'a real people's party'; on the other they required that the communists 'must stay in the Kuomintang and intensify their work in it'. But the heart of the problem was that the Kuomintang leadership consisted mainly of landowners and the wealthy upper strata, and they were opposed to any programme of land disttribution. In fact, many of the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party themselves considered any programme of land confiscation and redistribution to be altogether unrealistic and dangerous.[37]

After the Seventh Plenum Roy left for China accompanied by Jacques Doriot, Earl Browder and Tom Man and by his secretary Louise Geissler. Louise and Roy had met in 1926 and she continued to be his loyal and devoted companion for the next four years. They went by way of Vladivostok and reached Canton in February, 1927. Transport problems forced them to travel overland, and they reached Changsha on 1 April 1927 where '100,000 people turned out to greet the (Comintern) delegate'.[38] From there he proceeded to Hankow, where the Kuomintang had recently transferred its headquarters and seat of government. Here he met his old friend Michael Borodin who had been sent by the Comintern to China in 1923 and who, with Sun Yat-Sen's support, had built up an alliance between the Kuomintang and the Soviet Union. With the death of Sun Yat-Sen in March 1925, the alliance, however, began to show its tenuous character. Within the Kuomintang, divisions became sharp between the left-wing led by Wang Ching-Wei and the right-wing led by Chiang Kai-Shek

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[37] C. Brandt, B. Schwartz and J. K. Fairbank, *A Documentary History of Chinese Communism*, Cambridge, Harvard, 1952; C. Brandt, *Stalin's Failure in China 1924–27*, Cambridge, Harvard, 1958; H. Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, Stanford, 1961; M. N. Roy, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China*, Calcutta 1946; R.C. North, *Moscow and Chinese Communists*, Stanford 1965; C. M. Wilbur and J. L. Y. How, *Documents on Communism, Nationalism and Soviet Advisers in China 1918–27*, New York, 1956.

[38] *People's Tribune*, 3 April 1927, p. 1, quoted in North and Eudin, *M. N. Roy's Mission to China*, p. 59.

(who had had a brief period of military training in the Soviet Union in 1923). The leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (founded in July 1921) was itself divided and uncertain in its attitude to the Kuomintang. The CCP backed the Kuomintang Left in Wuhan, but under Borodin's guidance the party also wanted to maintain good relations with the Kuomintang Right in Nanchang under Chiang Kai-Shek. It was a highly complex and explosive situation with Chinese military overlords occupying several parts of China and fighting with one another, western powers controlling large sectors of the economy and trying to keep China disunited and weak, the nationalist Kuomintang divided between an aggressive right-wing and a hesitant left-wing, and growing restlessness in the countryside among peasants and in the towns among workers and the lower middle-class intelligentsia.

Roy had been charged by the Comintern with transforming the Kuomintang into a 'solid revolutionary bloc of the proletariat, peasantry, urban petty bourgeoisie and other oppressed and exploited strata'. On arrival in Wuhan he was profoundly shocked to find that Borodin's views and strategy were entirely opposed to his own—that Borodin considered any programme of agrarian revolution inexpedient, that he did not want any measure that would further alienate Chiang Kai-Shek or the right-wing of the Kuomintang or pressurize its left-wing, that he supported the proposed Northern Expedition instead of consolidating and widening the social forces of revolution. On 12 April 1927 Chiang Kai-Shek's armed squads rounded up Shanghai Communists and their labour unions were decimated. On 13–15 April Roy spoke to the Chinese Communist party leadership on 'the Base and the Social Forces of the Revolution' advocating agrarian revolution which would provide 'a revolutionary democratic base', but this was opposed by Borodin and the leader of the CCP, Chen Tu-Hsiu.[39] On 16 April the Central Committee of the CCP adopted a resolution supporting Roy's proposal, but two days later the Central Committee retracted the resolution. At a Conference of the Central Executive Committee of the Left Kuomintang held in the same month, the issue of land confiscation and distribution to the peasantry was debated; it was clear that the military men of the Left Kuomintang were opposed to land confiscation.

On 27 April the two-week long Fifth Congress of the CCP opened in Hankow. Roy proposed a programme of 'agrarian revolution, arming the peasants, organisation of rural self-government, creation of a state machinery for realization of the democratic dictatorship, and creation of a revolutionary army on a firm social basis'.[40] Although the 'Theses', the 'Resolution on the Agrarian Question' and the 'Manifesto' adopted by the Fifth Congress were very close to Roy's views, Borodin continued to oppose them, and on Borodin's instructions the CCP leadership tried to restrain spontaneous peasant uprisings for fear of antagonizing the Kuomintang military leaders. Frustrated by Borodin who controlled the purse-strings which prevented Roy from raising an armed force and pushing the programme of agrarian revolution, Roy appealed directly to Moscow.

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[39] For the text of Roy's speech, North and Eudin, ibid., pp. 160–75.

The issue was debated at the Eighth Plenum (18–30 May) of the Comintern Executive, and on 1 June a telegram was received from Stalin which called for support to land seizure by peasants and reinforcement of the leadership of the Kuomintang by new leaders thrown up by the programme of agrarian revolution. Borodin and the Chinese Communist leadership found the instruction so unrealistic that they decided to 'shelve' it. Wang Ching-Wei, wanted to be assured of the support of the Soviet Government before he pursued any radical programme, and Roy communicated to him Stalin's message expecting this would bring him closer to the CCP. On 15 June Roy submitted to the CCP Politbureau a 'Draft of the Chinese (The Communist Party and the Kuomintang) Platform of the National Revolution', and on 20 June he spoke to the Fourth Congress of the All-China Federation of Labour on 'The Crisis of the Revolution and the Tasks of the Proletariat'.[41] Wang Ching-Wei had by then decided to break his alliance with the Communists. He claimed to have found documents revealing communist plans 'to incite disorder and discredit the Kuomintang'. He ordered arrest and execution of communists, even though as late as 3 July the Central Committee of the CCP had decided at an emergency meeting to 'cease all agrarian activities'.[42] Roy opposed this decision which he considered to be a 'policy of defeat', but it was backed by Borodin and Chien Tu-Hsiu.

Roy now realized that he was not in a position to influence developments in China. He left Hankow in August 1927, travelled across the Mongolian deserts, and reached the Soviet Union by way of Urga. After making a brief official halt in Moscow he proceeded to Berlin where he prepared his Report on the Chinese situation and sent it along with relevant documents and articles to the Comintern.

Roy's role in China was at no stage criticized by the Comintern leadership and no evidence has been found so far to support the view that the setback in China had any direct bearing on his subsequent Comintern career. His China report was officially published from Moscow in 1929; his books, *La Liberation des Indes* (published from Paris in 1927) and *Die Internationalen Verbundeten der Opposition in der KPDSU* (published from Hamburg in 1928) had official approval; his journal *The Masses* continued publication till April 1928; he remained a member of the Comintern Presidium as late as its Ninth Plenum (9–25 February 1928) although by that time he no longer enjoyed Stalin's support. What had happened in 1927 was that the grim struggle for power between Stalin and his rivals in the Russian leadership had reached its climax. Trotsky and Zinoviev had been expelled from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; at the Fifteenth Congress of the CPSU (December 1927), seventy-five other leading members who opposed Stalin were also expelled.[43] The only one of any stature to survive the expulsion was Bukharin, but his alliance with Stalin would prove to be shortlived. In the French, German, Dutch, Czech and other European communist parties most members of the old guard who had some standing and could show some degree of independence had been excluded from their own parties and from the Comintern and replaced by people, who would carry out unquestioningly the command of the *apparatchiki*, or would not dare to voice their doubts. In 1928 Roy too had to pay the price for his independence when he went from Berlin to Moscow to attend the ninth plenary session of the ECCI. There were no charges against him; the resolution of the Plenum recognized that the 'first wave of the broad revolutionary movement of workers and peasants has subsided' in China, and then asked the CCP to 'prepare itself for a violent surge forward of new revolutionary waves'. The responsibility for the Comintern's debacle in China was more Stalin's than any one else's. Under oppositional attack, he made no admission of his errors but put the blame on the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party instead of on Roy or Borodin. But Roy was not allowed to present his views; Stalin refused to see him personally; and the *apparatchiki* made him realize that although he had been formally re-appointed a member of the Presidium, his position in the organization had become quite insecure. Before the Plenum was over Roy fell seriously ill. He had an operation for mastoiditis of his left ear; but he did not receive proper medical care and was virtually interned in a small hospital outside Moscow. At this point he was helped by Bukharin who still exercised some authority and power (the latter too would be expelled from the Politburo in November 1929). Louise Geissler, who had learned of Roy's illness and difficult situation, came to Moscow, and with Bukharin's connivance managed to fly Roy out to Berlin early in April. If the Orbureau Chief Piatnitsky had had his way Roy would have been indefinitely detained in the Soviet Union.[44]

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[40] For the text of Roy's speech at the Fifth Congress of CCP on 30 April 1927, see North and Eudin ibid, pp. 188–208. Also see Roy, *My Experiences in China*, Calcutta 1945; 'The Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of China', *Inprecor* VII: 41 (14 July 1927), 909–910; and 'Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China'. *Inprecor*, VII: 42 (21 July 1927), 926.

[41] North and Eudin, *M. N. Roy's Mission to China*, pp. 345–355 and pp. 358–60.

[42] R.C. North, *Moscow and the Chinese Communists*, p. 108.

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[43] Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, London, 1970, p. 310.

Roy spent a brief period of convalescence at St. Moritz and did not attend the Sixth Congress of Comintern (17 July–1 September) at Moscow where an extreme leftward policy was adopted. Socialists and social democrats in every country were declared to be counter-revolutionary and communist parties were asked to 'intensify the fight against bourgeois labour parties'. Stalin sponsored this ultra-left line to outmanoeuvre the supporters of Trotsky and undermine Bukharin and the supporters of the Right and Centre within the Russian party. It was also conceived to be in consonance with his doctrine of 'socialism in one country' and his programme of dekulakization, collectivization and rapid industrialization. As regards India, distorted versions of Roy's views were presented and severely attacked by Otto Wilhelm Kuusinen (a member of the powerful political secretariat, with Piatnitsky, Molotov and others) who charged him with authorship of the so-called 'decolonization thesis'. Workers' and Peasants' parties were to be liquidated and in their place a 'single, illegal, independent and centralised' Communist Party was to be organized and developed. Although Roy was misrepresented and attacked in his absence, no penalty was proposed except that he was not elected to the new executive or any of the other bodies of the Comintern.[45]

Roy did not agree with the new extremist line of the Sixth Congress, but instead of directly attacking it he sent in October a Statement from Berlin to the ECCI 'On the Indian Question in the Sixth Congress' explaining and defending his position. Meanwhile, the disastrous implications and consequences of the ultra-left line of the Sixth Congress began to be evident, especially in Germany, where communist attack on socialists only helped the Nazis and other reactionaries to increase their power. In the leadership of the Comintern or of the communist parties controlled by the Comintern *apparatchiki* there was no one left who could publicly criticize the new policy. But many of the old guard who had been thrown out before, during or after the Sixth Congress tried to form 'Communist Opposition' bodies which, while remaining loyal to the Communist ideology, were critical of the new Stalinist line.

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[44] Details are based on information provided by Louise Geissler. The same account is given in J. P. Haithcox, *Communism and Nationalism in India: M. N. Roy and Comintern Policy 1920–1939*, Princeton, 1971, pp. 85–7.

[45] *Protokoll des 6. Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale*, 4 vols., Hamburg, 1938; *Inprecor* (1928): 15, 44, 68, 72, 76, 78, 81, 83, 88 and 91; M. N. Roy, *Our Differences*, Calcutta, 1938.

Besides the group which supported Trotsky, now in exile, a centrist 'Opposition' group had formed with its base and main following in Germany, under the leadership of the old Spartacists, Brandler and Thalheimer. These two had been Roy's friends throughout the 1920s. Together with them, he noted with deep concern the gathering forces of fascism in Europe, especially in Germany, and he found himself in agreement with their advocacy of a united front of communists with socialists and social democrats against the Nazis. However, after recovering from his illness, he was for some time occupied in Berlin mainly with the preparation of a book 'The Decline and Fall of the British Empire' in collaboration with the British Communist, Hugh Rathbone. Like *India in Transition* this was planned to be a Marxist analysis of the nature and direction of colonialism, especially in the Indo-British context, but much more detailed and documented, and of the practical lessons and programme of action to be drawn from such an analysis. The book never got quite completed nor published. Roy left the draft of the manuscript and his large compilation of documents behind in Berlin when he returned clandestinely to India. The packet was burned during a Nazi raid on his publisher.

Till early 1929 Roy's articles continued to appear in *Inprecor*, articles in which he implicitly rejected the new Comintern line. He also contributed to Brandler's paper *Gegen den Strom* and another opposition paper *Volksrecht*. At the tenth plenum of the ECCI (3–19 July 1929) which expelled Bukharin from the Presidium and removed him from the chief editorship of *Pravda*, Roy was strongly attacked by Kuusinen, Manuilsky and Lozovsky, and it was decided to expel him from the Comintern on the charge of 'contributing to the Brandler press and supporting the Brandler organizations'.[46] The news of his expulsion first appeared in *Gegen den Strom* (36.7), which also published his 'Open Letter to the Members of the Communist International', titled 'Meine Verbrechen' (My Crime) dated 7 September. In the letter he declared that he disagreed 'with all resolutions made by the Sixth Congress, not only the one on the Indian Question', and that his 'crime consists in that I demand the right to independent thought and that is not permitted in the current critical period of the international'.[47] He then published a series of 12 articles 'Die Krisis der Kommunistischen Internationale' in Brandler's paper. On 13 December Roy's formal expulsion was announced in *Inprecor*. Since then communists in India have persistently maligned him, but the only official reason ever given by the Comintern was his contribution to the Brandler press.

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[46] *Inprecor*, IX (1929), 69; A. K. Hindi, *M. N. Roy: the Man Who Looked Ahead*, Ahmedabad 1938. Hindi whose real name is Tayab Shaikh was a close associate of Roy during the late 1920s and 1930s in Germany and India, and his book contains a detailed account (pp. 106–94) of the Sixth Congress, disagreement and expulsion.

[47] *Gegen den Strom*, Vol. 2 No. 37 (September, 1929), 'Meine Verbrechen: Offener Brief an die Mitglieder der Kommunistischen Internationale', pp. 9–11. English version included in M. N. Roy, *Our Differences*, Calcutta, 1938, pp. 25–43.

Return to India: Prison Years

Roy knew that one phase of his life was over, but that in no way meant final defeat or inevitability of surrender or compromise. He decided now to return to India, knowing fully well the terrible risks involved, and against the persistent advice of his German friends and colleagues. Of the two substantial assignments he had given to himself after his departure from Moscow the grand Gibbonian project (Decline and Fall) could not be completed, but the other hardly less formidable project was finished by early 1930. This was his magnum opus *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China.*[48] That done, he got himself ready for departure. A social analyst and theoretician of outstanding ability he nevertheless believed like a true Marxist that a philosopher's job was not merely to interpret history but also to share in its making. A Civil Disobedience movement had been launched in India in March 1930 under Gandhi's leadership but it seemed to have no direction. Roy felt that his revolutionary experience and ideas would be more useful in India at this juncture.

In Berlin Roy had got together a group of young revolutionary associates who remained loyal to him, and towards the end of 1930 he sent some of them to India. With them he despatched copies of a 'Manifesto to the Revolutionary Vanguard of the Toiling Masses of India'. He left Europe himself in November and, travelling overland via Istanbul and Baghdad with a stolen passport in the name of one 'Banerji', he reached Karachi on 11 December 1930 and proceeded to Bombay where he adopted the name 'Dr Mahmud'. During the next seven months he travelled extensively in North India, formed local units of an underground political organization, and propogated the idea of convening a 'Constituent Assembly'. He met in the clandestine a number of Congress leaders and attended the Karachi session of the Indian National Congress at the invitation of Jawaharlal Nehru. He also contributed articles to the opposition press abroad, and taught his close associates how to organize and run active trade unions. During all this time police intelligence agents were hot on his heels. On 21 July 1931 he was traced by the police to a hideout in

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[48] Roy's book, written originally in English, was published at first in a German translation by his colleague in the German 'Opposition', Paul Froelich: *Revolution und Konter-revolution in China*, Soziologische Verlagsanstalt, Berlin, 1930. The English version was published from Calcutta in 1946, with two new-chapters and an epilogue.

Bombay, arrested on the basis of a warrant issued in 1924, and taken to Kanpur where his trial took place behind prison walls. He conducted his own defence but was not allowed to put forward his defence statement. The statement was smuggled out and published simultaneously under the titles 'My Defense' and 'I accuse' respectively by the Roy Defence Committee from Pondicherry and New York. On 9 January 1932 he was sentenced to twelve years' transportation. On appeal this was reduced on 2 May 1933 to six years' rigorous imprisonment. He spent five years and four months in prison, first at Kanpur, then Bareilly, Almora and Dehradun. The prison years ruined his iron constitution, but his invincible spirit continued to be strong and active even in solitary confinement and terrible privation.

Despite severe restrictions Roy managed to keep in touch with his political associates both in India and abroad by smuggling out letters, instructions and articles, quite often with the help of non-political 'C' class prisoners. He prepared a manifesto and programme which was published by his followers under the title *Our Task in India* in 1932 and which formed the basis of their secret illegal organization, the Revolutionary Party of the Indian Working Class. In spite of the vilification campaign against Roy by the Communists in India, the 'Royists' were able to consolidate their position in the All-India Trade Union Congress. They also became active in the Congress Socialist Party when it was formed in 1934 and occupied leading positions in this legal left-wing organization. Roy's *Letters to the Congress Socialist Party*, written and smuggled out in 1934, 1935 and 1936, were published as a book in 1937. In 1935 he addressed a letter to the Communist International pointing out the disastrous consequences of the policy of the Sixth Congress, and urging a radical change in view of the experiences of the last seven years. Shortly afterwards, when the Seventh Congress (25 July–20 August 1935) of the Comintern changed its policy from extreme leftism to United Front, he expected that there would be reconciliation but neither the *apparatchiki* in Moscow nor the Communist leadership in India wanted an independent-spirited revolutionary in their fold. Meanwhile, his contributions had continued to appear in *Gegen den Strom* and the other opposition journal, INKOPP (*Internationale Nachrichten der Kom. Opp*).

As a Marxist Roy believed in the unity of theory and *praxis*, and even in jail his practical and programmatic concern was never in abeyance. But the enforced confinement gave him more time for systematic study and reflection than before, since becoming a revolutionary at the age of eighteen in 1905. His friends in Germany, especially his future wife Ellen Gottschalk (whom he had met in October 1928), kept providing him with books which he wanted. His letters to her, published subsequently as *Letters from Jail* (1943), contain pointers to his reading and thinking during those dark years. This deeply moving book, even more than the *Memoirs*, reveals aspects of his personality which are naturally less evident in his polemical, scholarly or other impersonal writings—his warmth and loyalty, courage and compassion, fortitude and openness of mind, sense of humour and style, his moments of agony and despair, and the abundance of his *elan* which would never dry up even under terrible pressure.

It was Roy's plan to use his prison years in writing a systematic study of 'the philosophical consequences of modern science', which in a way would be a re-examination and re-formulation of Marxism to which he had been committed since 1919. But he was allowed only limited sheets of writing paper each day which had to be lodged with the prison authorities after they had been used; and the reading material he could obtain were though selective, quite inadequate. Protesting against the restrictions put on Roy's research, Albert Einstein wrote from his address in Rhode Island on 17 September 1934 to the British Embassy in Washington urging that adequate research facilities be made available to the prisoner who was a scholar of eminence, whatever might be his political beliefs. I have not been able to discover if this appeal from the eminent scientist had any influence with the government or the prison authorities. But the reflections which Roy wrote down in jail grew over a period of five years into nine thick volumes (approximately over 3000 lined foolscap-size pages). The 'Prison Manuscripts' have so far not been published in their entirety and are currently preserved in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library Archives in New Delhi. But in the late 1930s and 1940s, selected portions from the manuscripts were published as separate books at different times the titles of a few of which indicate the range and direction of his intellectual preoccupation during these long lonely years: *Materialism, an outline of the history of Scientific Thought* (1940); *Science and Philosophy* (1947); *Heresies of the 20th Century* (1939); *Science and Superstition* (1940); *Fascism, its philosophy, professions and practice* (1938); *The Historical Role of Islam* (1939); *Ideal of Indian Womanhood* (1941); *India's Message* (1950), etc. Not satisfied with a primarily economic explanation of historical processes he studied and tried to assess the role of cultural and ideational factors, whether in traditional or contemporary India, or in the rise and expansion of Islam, or in the phenomenon of fascism. His reflections on the obscurantist professions and practices of neo-Hindu Nationalism were particularly severe. He tried to reformulate materialism in the context of recent developments in the physical and biological sciences, convinced as he was that without the growth and development of a materialist and rationalist outlook in India neither a renaissance nor a democratic revolution would be possible.

From the Congress to the RDP

Roy was released on 20 November 1936, and he joined the Indian National Congress where he was elected a member of the All-India Congress Committee. However, his trenchant criticism of Gandhi and his persistent call for a secular and democratic alternative leadership to Gandhi and for the convening of a Constituent Assembly turned the established leadership of the Congress against him. At the same time while Jawaharlal Nehru never concealed his admiration for Roy's personality and ideas, the former's unshakeable loyalty to Gandhi and his readiness to make compromises with the right-wing while proclaiming his socialist sentiments, provoked Roy to expose Nehru's ambivalence and 'bad faith', and this made him very unpopular with the latter's large following in the country. The relations between him and the Congress Socialists who thrived under Nehru's patronage soon became strained and by August 1937 most Royists left the Congress Socialist Party. Meanwhile Roy and his followers were under incessant attack from the Communist Party of India, and Roy's deeply held and unambiguously proclaimed anti-fascism did not favour genuine friendship and understanding with the most popular leader of militant Indian nationalism, Subhash Chandra Bose, who was known to have a penchant for dictators and their ideologies. Roy's radical rejection of India's so-called 'spiritual heritage', his view of Hinduism as an 'ideology of slavery', his persistent stress on a cultural revolution as an essential component of any political, economic and social revolution, did not win him popularity in a tradition-bound country. Indeed, his uncompromising radicalism separated him as a lonely figure, ahead of his time, who was unlikely to be very effective in the increasingly populist political climate of the period.

On 4 March 1937, Ellen Gottschalk arrived from Europe to join Roy in Bombay and on 10 March they got married. On 4 April the new weekly, *Independent India*, started publication from Bombay under Roy's editorship. Through it Roy advocated transformation of Congress primary committees into active and effective people's committees which were to be instruments of struggle for independence and social revolution and the network of which was to provide the basis of an alternative people's government to the British Raj in India. He continued to advocate the crucial importance of a Constituent Assembly which would declare India's independence and commit the country to a democratic political system, an agrarian revolution and a secular and scientific outlook. He travelled extensively, presiding over Youth Conferences in U.P. and Madras, Agricultural Labourers' Conference in Andhra, various meetings and conferences in Bengal, Berar and Nagpur and finally in the summer of 1938 decided to establish his headquarters in Dehradun where a deserted old cottage at 13 Mohini Road was rented for this purpose. In 1946 the place was purchased by the newly-formed Indian Renaissance Institute which put it at his disposal as its Founder-Director.

In the columns of *Independent India*, his books, pamphlets and speeches Roy continued on the one hand, to warn against the aggressive programme of the fascist powers and the appeasement policy of the western democracies and on the other, to advocate the growth of a genuinely democratic leadership within the Congress to lead the country simultaneously to political independence and agrarian revolution. In 1939 the Congress President Subhash Chandra Bose resigned his position because the right-wing would not co-operate with him. Roy had proposed to Bose to constitute a left-wing executive, but Bose did not accept his advice. On 1 May 1939 Roy and his followers formed the League of Radical Congressmen which had its first All-India Conference in Poona on 27–28 June 1939. Meanwhile the betrayal of Czechoslovakia to Nazi Germany in September 1938 by Britain and France had pushed the world closer to the brink of another World War. In August 1939 the Soviet Union, in self-defence, entered into a pact with Nazi Germany, but Roy in his speeches and writings argued that the pact would be short-lived. On 1 September war broke out in Europe. Roy analysed the war as 'internecine', having alternative possibilities, but rejected the line of 'war resistance in the countries involved in a war against Hitlerism' as that 'will reduce the chances of the defeat of Nazi Germany'. In October the Congress Ministries which had been formed in a number of provinces after the 1937 elections resigned from office and preparations began for *satyagraha* against the British under Gandhi's leadership. In November the Comintern Executive characterized the war as an 'imperialist war' and instructed communist parties to oppose it.[49] But in April–May of 1940 Nazi armies occupied Denmark, Norway, Belgium and the Netherlands, and in June France fell to the Nazi *Wehrmacht*. Roy, who had in March contested the election to the

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[49] Jane Degras, *The Communist International* Vol. 3, pp. 439–48, 'ECCI Manifesto' of November 1939. On the outbreak of the war H. Pollitt, General Secretary, Communist Party of Great Britain, wrote a pamphlet *How to Win the War*, but this was immediately withdrawn and Pollitt removed from his office of General Secretary. The Communist parties of France and Great Britain opposed the war in view of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, and the policy was not changed till Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union.

Congress Presidentship and been defeated, convened a study camp of the League of Radical Congressmen at Dehradun in May 1940 where the national and international situation was subjected to critical analysis. (His lectures at the camp were subsequently published under the title *Scientific Politics* in 1942.) In August Roy characterized the war as an 'anti-fascist war', and in September meetings were organized in different parts of India by the LRC demanding India's unconditional participation in the war. The support was based primarily on two considerations, that victory of the fascists would mean the end of civilization, and therefore the fascists would have to be fought if political independence were to have any meaning, and secondly, the progress of the war would also mean weakening of western imperialism and strengthening of democratic forces, and successful end of the war would see the break-up of the empires and emergence of the colonies as independent states.

But Roy's views were not shared by the Congress leadership (although Nehru for a while could not quite make up his mind), and in October he was suspended by the U.P. Provincial Committee from all elective positions in the Congress. On appeal to the Congress executive the suspension was cancelled and he was permitted to resign. The LRC now decided to break with the Congress, and in December 1940 at an all-India Conference in Bombay the Radical Democratic Party was inaugurated. The RDP supported the anti-fascist war and committed itself to the 'programme of National Freedom and Social Emancipation'.

On 22 June 1941 Hitler attacked the Soviet Union. Communist parties were immediately instructed by the Comintern to support Great Britain in the war, but the message took six months to reach and effect a change of line in the Indian Communist party, which until then maintained an anti-war stand. In July Roy proposed to the All-India Trade Union Congress to support the war effort; but the proposal was opposed by both nationalists and communists, and in November the Radicals broke with the AITUC and formed a separate organization, the Indian Federation of Labour. In December, America declared war on Japan, Germany and Italy declared war on the USA, and the Soviet Union, Britain and the USA became allies against the Fascist powers. The war took a critical turn early in 1942 with the fall of Singapore in February. The Cripps Mission sent to India in March failed to reach a settlement with the Congress, and in August Gandhi launched the 'Quit India' movement. It was after the defeat of the invading German army at Stalingrad in February 1943 that the course of the war began to favour the allies, and on 15 May the Comintern was formally dissolved by Stalin on the ground that 'this will result in a further strengthening of the United Front of the Allies'.[50]

Since his release from jail Roy had hardly any rest, his time being fully stretched by his frequent tours, the organizational work of the RDP and IFL, the editing of *Independent India*, lectures and study camps, and negotiations with various groups whom he sought to attract to the anti-fascist front. He suffered from various ailments which were a legacy of his prison years, but there seemed to be no diminution in his energy or his intellectual output. He received invaluable support in all his activities from his wife Ellen who not only looked after his health and comfort but shared his organizational responsibilities. She took down in shorthand his public speeches and seminar lectures and transcribed them for publication, and brought into his strenuous life the warmth of love, intellectual partnership and her own very special gifts. For example, her green fingers converted the rubble-ground at Mohini Road into an astonishingly verdant and colourful garden and her feeling for poetry and music greatly enriched the political and intellectual atmosphere of the 'Royist' milieu.[51] Among books published by Roy in 1940 were *The Alternative*, and *Gandhism, Nationalism and Socialism*, and in 1942 *Freedom or Fascism?*, *War and Revolution*, *Scientific Politics*, and *India and War*.

In September 1943 the headquarters of the RDP and the weekly *Independent India* were moved from Bombay to Delhi and an office of the RDP was opened in London. It was now widely believed that the victory of the allies in the war would also mean the beginning of the end of British rule in India. The need for formulation of plans for India's post-war reconstruction was keenly felt by many. During 1943 Roy published several books analysing wartime trends, and showing the alternatives of development which faced the Indian people. These included *The Communist International, Nationalism, an Antiquated Cult, Indian Labour and Post-War Reconstruction, Nationalism, Democracy and Freedom* and *Poverty or Plenty*? In his articles and speeches he pointed out the danger of a post-war transfer of power which would impose on India an indigenous but neo-fascist polity and economy, and he urged on the people to opt for an alternative which would combine independence with genuine political democracy and economic reconstruction the motivation of which would not be private profit or expansion of the bureaucracy but improvement in the quality and standard of life of the common people.

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[50] Jane Degras, *The Communist International* Vol. 3, p. 476; Resolution of the ECCI Presidium published in *World News and Views*, XXIII, 22.

[51] For details of her career and a selection of her writings, S. N. Ray, (ed.), *The World Her Village: A Book of Ellen Roy*, Calcutta, 1979.

The IFL met at Bombay in December 1943 and appointed a committee to draft a Plan of Economic Development based on Roy's ideas. The draft, prepared by G. D. Parikh, B. N. Banerjea and V. M. Tarkunde, was adopted by a special Conference of the IFL held at Jharia in May 1944 and published as the *People's Plan*. During the year several new books by Roy were also published: *National Government or People's Government?*, *Alphabet of Fascist Economics* (jointly with G. D. Parikh) and *Planning a New India*. Besides developing the outlines of an alternative economy Roy was also occupied during 1944 with preparing the draft outlines of an alternative political system for independent India. In July the RDP had issued a manifesto demanding General Elections, Universal Suffrage and Responsible Government, and after the breakdown of Gandhi-Jinnah talks in September over the issue of Pakistan, Roy had proposed a federal democratic Indian Republic. He now prepared the text of *Constitution of India, a Draft* which was released for public discussion in December 1944.

The alternative system of political economy which Roy proposed emphasized decentralization and devolution of power, growth of peoples' committees and co-operatives as the principal instruments through which common people would participate effectively in the decision-making process and in the production and distribution of wealth, and the evolution of a pyramidal structure in which effective power and utilization of wealth remain substantially with the primary units at the base and are reduced successively at higher levels. The Plan and the Constitution anticipated several of the principles which were to be formulated and developed as Radical Humanism in 1946 and subsequent years.

The Germans surrendered in May 1945 and in June Congress leaders were released from prison. The elections in Britain in July voted the Labour Party to office, and efforts now began in earnest to bring about a negotiated settlement between the Indian political leaders and the British government. Elections to the Central Legislative Assembly held in December 1945 in accordance with rules framed under the old Acts of 1919 and 1935 and on a very limited franchise established the Muslim League as the Congress' main rival for power. Under Jinnah's leadership the League won every Muslim seat and 86.6 per cent of the total votes cast in Muslim constituencies. Early in 1946, elections to the provincial legislatures, also on a limited franchise (13 per cent of the adult population), reconfirmed the Congress and the League as the two major political parties in India. The Radical Democrat candidates who contested the elections were defeated in each case. The fact that the Indian Federation of Labour had received a grant of Rs. 13,000 per month from the Government during the war was used by the nationalists in their campaign against the Radicals. During 1945 besides his *Draft Constitution*, Roy published two more books, *The Problem of Freedom* (which was a psychoanalytical study of the fascist inclinations of Indian Nationalism and which used Erich Fromm's concept of 'fear of freedom' for an appraisal of Gandhi's authoritarian personality and retrogressive ideas and methods), and *Jawaharlal Nehru* (which was a devastating attack on the Indian leader for his lack of consistency and good faith). in his writings and speeches of 1945–6 Roy warned repeatedly against the manner in which power was being transferred from British to Indian vested interests without any social, political or economic revolution and without any benefit to the overwhelming majority of the Indian people. He was also by now thoroughly disillusioned with the Soviet Union the policies of which he had generally supported since the Seventh Comintern Congress, but which in the final years of the war and later began to reveal itself to his critical eyes as being totalitarian, chauvinist, exploitative and imperialist. The radical change in his assessment of the Soviet Union took place over a period of time and is recorded in the substantially enlarged edition of his book *The Russian Revolution* (1949) which incorporated his earlier book of the same title published in 1937 plus his writings on the Comintern and the Soviet Union during the 1940s.[52]

Beyond Communism

While critically following national and international developments Roy concentrated during the early months of 1946, on formulation of principles which would be intellectually and morally more satisfying and consistent with his basic pursuit of freedom than those he had upheld so far. I do not think that his central commitment and aspiration ever changed or were obscured at anytime during his chequered career. He believed individual freedom to be essential to human growth and he was driven by the vision of a society where freedom was not the privilege of a few but should be enjoyed by every man, women and child. During the first fifteen years of his active political life he whole-heartedly accepted revolutionary nationalism as the ideology of this great human endeavour. But he was disillusioned when, through experience and reflection, he realized that revolutionary nationalism, in practice, was almost solely occupied with overthrow of foreign rule, and did not concern itself with establishment of freedom and justice within the country whose independence it sought. Nationalism very well could and in many cases did establish and justify domestic tyranny and exploitation. He never had much regard for bourgeois democracy the imperialist expression of which he had seen at first hand in British-occupied India, and his distrust was deepened by his experience of American intervention in Mexico and other Latin American countries. The liberal pretensions of the bourgeoisie were to his mind utterly hypocritical, seeking to conceal the reality of manipulation and exploitation under cover of rhetoric and glossy institutions. Rejecting revolutionary nationalist and bourgeois democratic ideologies he had embraced Marxism in the second phase of his career and found it stimulating in both theory and practice. He had made his own substantial contribution to Marxism by writing illuminatingly and extensively on India and China and on conflicting forces and developments in the non-western world, and by organizing both inside and outside India groups of converts and sympathizers.[53] But after the Sixth Congress of the Comintern doubts about the moral and intellectual propensities of the communist movement began to trouble him, and during his solitary years in prison he re-examined some of its basic postulates. In the context of the rise of fascism in Europe and the cynically successful exploitation of the religious faith of the people by the political leaders of India, he could not but concede a more than epiphenomenal significance to cultural-traditional-psychological factors in the shaping of human history. Nevertheless, he continued to see and project himself as a Marxist, through of a somewhat heterodox type (showing some unconscious points of affinity with the views of such Marxist contemporaries as Georg Lukacs, Ernst Bloch and Antonio (Gramsci). In spite of the viciously maligning campaign of the official communists in India against him, he remained for a long time, even after his break with the Comintern, loyal to the Soviet Union.

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[52] M. N. Roy, *The Russian Revolution*, Calcutta, 1949, esp. Section 6.

However, the misgivings about the ruthless pursuit of power and suppression of intellectual freedom which had arisen in his mind in consequence of his personal experience in the late 1920s, and the subsequent revelations of the ugly features of the Bolshevik regime during the 1930s and early 1940s gradually undermined his faith in the moral and intellectual soundness of communism as an ideology. By the end of the war he realized that the collectivist and anti-libertarian nature of communism allowed no inner restraint against its coalescing with chauvinism, expansionism, imperialism and totalitarianism. Freedom for the common man had become even more remote under the dictatorship of the Party than in the bourgeois democracies; and instead of 'revolution from below', much of Eastern Europe had been reduced into the colonies of the Russian empire by imposing the victorious Red Army on the 'liberated' states.

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[53] For details of such groups, Cecil Kaye, *Communism in India*; David Petrie, *Communism in India 1924–27* (reprint), Calcutta 1972; A. K. Hindi, *M. N. Roy*; J. P. Haithcox, *The Roy-Lenin Debate.*

Rejecting then nationalism, bourgeois democracy and communism, Roy now searched for a new body of principles which would both explain historic processes and provide guidelines for a restructuring of society towards freedom and justice in an increasing measure in the lives of the common people. In spite of his highly critical view of communism, he did not, however, disavow his debt or lineage to Marx. When in July 1945 he brought out in collaboration with Sudhindranath Datta *The Marxian Way*, 'a quarterly journal devoted to enquiry and learning', he gave the place of honour in the first issue to Datta's article 'The Liberal Retrospect' and put next to it Philip Spratt's highly critical piece on 'Marxism and Ethics', but in the editorial he argued that 'Marxism is . . . not a closed system. Much less is it a bunch of dogmas. It is, rather a method of thinking'. He emphasized that there is nothing in Marx 'which prohibits revision necessitated by advance of knowledge', and since Marxism places man in the centre of the world, it recognizes creativeness and freedom as features of human existence and thus does not repudiate morality. Even when he subsequently changed the name of the journal to *The Humanist Way* (1949), he explained editorially that 'the positive elements of Marxism, freed from its fallacies . . . are consistent with a more comprehensive philosophy which can be called Integral or Radical Humanism'.[54] In the end he no longer saw himself as a Marxist, but the deep influence of Marx even on the final phase of his thought is evidenced by his persistent effort to unite theory with praxis, interpretation of the past and the present with formulations of a programme of change, pursuit of knowledge with appeal to organized action.

In 1946 there was hardly any scope for effective political action on the part of Roy or his radical supporters in India. The elections had clearly established the Congress and the League as the native organizations of power-elites to whom power in the subcontinent was going to be shortly transferred by the exhausted and withdrawing British. Roy's anticipations were proving to be correct; British imperialism was disintegrating fast, and vested interests in India would be in the saddle flaunting the banner of independence. There were, however, hardly any signs of a social revolution. But India required a revolution; the built-in inequities and forms of oppression which had kept the overwhelming majority of the Indian people poor, ignorant, divided and largely immobile would not disappear with the departure

[54] *The Humanist Way*, IV, No. 1; p. 69.

of the foreigners. Neither bourgeois democracy nor communism offered the hope of a revolution which would bring the common people effectively into the centre of the decision-making process. A new model of revolution had to be thought out, and if it proved suitable for India, it might influence people in other countries who also seemed to be looking for better and viable alternatives.

Principles of Radical Humanism

To share the ideas which had been forming in his mind Roy organized a Political Study Camp at Dehradun from 8–18 May, 1946. Here Roy outlined in a series of lectures some of the main features of what he at this stage called Radicalism as distinguished from Marxism. Radicalism, he claimed, 'proposes to rescue Marxism from degeneration into orthodoxy'; it does 'propose revision of Marxism', is not 'identical' with it, but nor are the two 'mutually exclusive'.[55] Radicalism rejects dictatorship and authoritarianism in any form; it is rooted in the human urge for freedom and truth; its institutional embodiment is grassroots democracy. The task of the radicals was on the one hand, to help in the growth of a network of effective people's committees, and on the other, to develop an atmosphere where persons of intellectual detachment and moral integrity may come forward to play an influential role in public affairs.

Roy's lectures at the Study Camp were published as a book in December 1946 under the title *New Orientation*. He also wrote an introduction to my book *Radicalism* which was published simultaneously with his own book, and which had been written at his instance immediately after the Camp and then serialized in *Independent India*. The year 1946 also saw the long-awaited the publication of the first English edition of his monumental work, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China*.

In the later part of 1946 while the subcontinent was moving inexorably towards partition (the acute disagreement between Nehru and Jinnah over their respective interpretations of the Cabinet Mission's Constitutional Plan in July, their total distrust of each other, and the large-scale Hindu-Muslim riots and killings at Calcutta which marked the Direct Action Day in August virtually ruled out the possibility of a united India,) Roy was occupied with the formulation of the principles of Radical Democracy. He prepared a draft in which the basic ideas were very succinctly put in the form of a set of theses (in the tradition of Marx) and this was circulated to a small number of selected friends and associates. The 'Twenty-two Theses' or 'Principles of Radical Democracy' which emerged in consequence of intense discussions and exchanges between Roy and this circle of friends (which included Laxman Shastri Joshi, Philip Spratt, V. M. Tarkunde, G. D. Parikh, G. R. Dalvi, Ellen Roy and myself) were adopted at the Bombay conference of the Radical Democratic Party in December 1946.

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[55] M. N. Roy, *New Orientation* (reprint), Delhi, 1982; also see S. N. Ray, *Radicalism*, Calcutta, 1946.

During 1946 also was established the Indian Renaissance Institute at Dehradun with Roy as its Founder-Director. Its objects were 'to develop, organize and conduct a movement to be called the Indian Renaissance Movement, whose aim will be to rescue the positive contributions of ancient Indian thought and learning . . . to organize historical research with a critical and scientific spirit . . . to elaborate a system of philosophy adequate to the present problems and future developments . . . to spread the spirit of Enlightenment, Humanism and search for truth'.[56] Roy was convinced that without a cultural and philosophical revolution no social, political and economic revolution was possible. The Theses declared that 'quest for freedom and search for truth constitute the basic urge of human progress', that 'freedom is progressive disappearance of restrictions on the unfolding of the potentialities of individuals as human beings', that 'the brain is a means of production and produces the most revolutionary commodity' and hence 'man is the maker of his world—man as a thinking being'.[57] Radical democracy involves a social revolution in which exploitation of man by man and delegation of power to a few are totally eliminated, but these would require a moral-intellectual revolution which activates and strengthens in the common people the basic human commitment to freedom and truth.

In April 1947 the principle of partitioning the subcontinent was accepted by the Congress and in June by Sikhs and the Muslim League. The political leaders were impatient to come to power, in spite of the price which would have to be paid in terms of communal killings or mass-migrations on an unprecedented scale. Though conscious of this the leaders nevertheless cynically came to a settlement with the abdicating foreign rulers. In August as power was transferred to the entrenched political elites in India and Pakistan, the Radical Democratic Party issued a manifesto, 'Forward to Freedom', which reminded the people that political independence was only a phase in the continuing struggle of common men and women for real freedom and justice in their everyday life. On 15 August 1947 Roy also published *New Humanism, A Manifesto* which offered an elaboration of the twenty-two Theses, explaining the inadequacies of both liberalism and Marxism and presenting the alternative political ideal of radical democracy. The end of the year also saw the publication of *Beyond Communism*, authored jointly by Roy and Philip Spratt, which included the speeches of both given at the Bombay Conference of the RDP in December 1946. Besides rejecting Communism and expounding his new ideas, Roy here also made it quite clear that the philosophy of radical humanism was materialist and that it recognized the priority of existence to consciousness. Further, it also believed that though it was the law-governed nature of the universe which was the objective ground of reason, knowledge and truth, ideas formulated by the human brain also had objective reality and their dynamic impact on the environment was a major determinant of the course of human history.

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[56] *Indian Renaissance Institute, Review and Perspective*, p. 9.

[57] M. N. Roy, *New Humanism, a Manifesto* (reprint), Calcutta 1974, Theses 2, 3, 15; pp. 51–6.

Since 1920 Roy had been a consistent and uncompromising critic of Gandhi. in Gandhi's personality, programme and political method Roy subsequently saw features of an Indian type of incipient fascism. He attacked Gandhi's mixture of religion and politics, his anti-scientific and obscurantist attitude, his alliance with Indian capitalists and landlords, his shrewd exploitation of popular unrest to strengthen his own hold over the Congress, his calling-off of movements at critical junctures and his coming to terms repeatedly with the established power. Roy called for an alternative leadership to Gandhi which would be committed to scientific outlook and an agrarian-democratic revolution. He did not underestimate Gandhi's influence although he passionately wanted it to be overthrown. Roy's own failure to have much effect on the course of Indian political developments (despite his brilliant analysis and often quite accurate predictions) owed a great deal to the hold of Gandhi on the Congress and the Indian people. But since 1946 Gandhi too had become a rather lonely figure in Indian public life. Nearly all his erstwhile political disciples, who owed much of their eminence and influence to Gandhi's backing, had virtually deserted the old man in their impatient longing for power, even while extolling his mahatmic virtues to the skies. Gandhi was opposed to partition and was willing to delay transfer of power till matters were amicably settled between the leaders of the two communities. He wished the Congress organization to voluntarily dissolve itself and its members to dedicate themselves to social service. During the communal riots and mass killings of 1946 and 1947 while others were busy with manoeuvres and transactions, Gandhi worked singlemindedly for reconciliation and peace between the Hindus and Muslims. Then in January 1948 he was assassinated by a Hindu fanatic.[58]

In 1938 Roy had written a critical appreciation of Gandhi in which while conceding that the Mahatma was 'the political awakener of the Indian masses' he had also emphasized that 'Gandhi's philosophy would not permit development of the spirit of revolt'. The tragic end of Gandhi demanded a reassessment. Roy wrote two articles, 'The Message of the Martyr' (February) and 'Homage to the Martyr' (April) in his weekly *Independent India*. Roy now recognized that Gandhi's appeal was essentially 'moral, humanist, cosmopolitan', but 'the nobler core of his message could not be reconciled with the intolerant cult of nationalism, which he also preached'. Gandhi was a victim of this cult, but in his final phase it was the 'moral and humanist core of his ideas' which shaped his efforts. His profound concern for morality in politics and rejection of power-politics was what constituted 'the abiding message of Gandhism'. A year later in January 1949 he again spoke in praise of Gandhi's commitment to truth and non-violence. While fundamental differences, of course, persisted between Roy's uncompromising materialism and Gandhi's religious view of the world, there would thus seem to have been some narrowing of distance, some movement in a common direction (e.g., stress on decentralization and devolution of power, on means as integral part of end,) in the final phase, although but for Gandhi's tragic end this might not have been noted at all by Roy.[59]

In May 1948 Roy directed a summer school of higher studies of the Indian Renaissance Institute. The various theoretical and practical problems which were confronted in the course of the development, propagation and application of radical humanism were examined in the study camp. What became evident from these discussions was that (a) for a renaissance movement and democratic revolution a political party was an altogether unsuitable instrument, and (b) that radical or organized democracy was not consistent with the institution of political parties. Roy decided to present these views to the consideration of the forthcoming conference of the Radical Democratic Party in December in Calcutta. Meanwhile he wrote a foreword to the book *In Man's Own Image* written jointly by Ellen Roy and myself and published in August 1948; the book was an attempt to expound in a systematic manner the twenty-two Theses of radical humanism.

Since the summer camp of 1946 Roy had been mainly occupied with the development and elaboration of his new ideas. The study camps organized by the Indian Renaissance Institute and the lecture tours which he undertook during the winter months at Bombay, Calcutta and other university towns were occasions for presentation of his philosophy. 'Active' politics of the type which occupied him so fully for four decades was no longer of much personal interest to him; but he continued to observe and make illuminating analyses of contemporary political developments. Thus in 1947 he addressed a 'Manifesto' to the delegates of the Asian Relations Conference in Delhi; through 1947–8 he wrote repeatedly against 'the Cold War' between the U.S.A and the Soviet Union, and opposed any involvement in this suicidal struggle. But his main concern was radical humanism, and having reached the conclusion that the existence of the Radical Democratic Party was inconsistent with the new philosophy, he wanted it to be voluntarily dissolved.

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[58] For a very detailed account, see Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi The Last Phase*, Ahmedabad, 1966.

[59] Dennis Dalton, 'Gandhi and Roy' in S. N. Ray (ed.); *Gandhi, India and the World*, Melbourne, Philadelphia and Bombay, 1970; S. Ray, 'Tagore, Gandhi and Roy', *Gandhian Perspectives*, Vol. II, No. 1, October, 1979.

This was done at the Calcutta conference of the Party in December 1948, although not a few of the Old Guard were unhappy with the decision. At the conference, Theses 19 and 20 were amended deleting all references to the party. Radical Democrats were described as 'the guides, friends and philosophers of the people', who must be themselves 'spiritually free men' aiming 'at the widest diffusion of power'. Instead of functioning as members of a political party, they should try to develop a Radical Humanist movement 'based on individual initiative, individual endeavour and individual freedom'. Their objective would not be political power, but a renaissance or a philosophical revolution without which grassroots democracy would neither emerge nor be sustained in India. Roy's lectures and essays on 'partyless politics' were posthumously put together and published by Ellen Roy in 1960 under the title, *Politics, Power and Parties.*

The Radical Humanist Movement

The dissolution of the Radical Democratic Party freed Roy to a considerable extent from organizational pressures and responsibilities, but it did not reduce his workload. He had to devote a good part of his time and energy to expounding the principles of his philosophy and developing the Radical Humanist Movement. Although he suffered from severe and persistent attacks of asthma and the state of his health caused much concern to his wife and friends, he persisted in maintaining his regular schedule of lecture tours through the winter months each year. Between 1949 and the early months of 1952 he gave lectures on a wide variety of topics at Bombay, Poona, Belgaum, Dharwar, Hubli, Sholapur, Delhi, Hyderabad, Tenali, Vijayawada, Waltair, Calcutta, Uttarpara, Dacca and other places.

There were also study camps, both national and regional, the most important among them being the one held at Mussoorie for ten days in May–June 1949, under the auspices of the IRI. The programme of studies was drawn up in detail by Roy who directed the camp; it involved a systematic and careful re-examination of the basic formulations of radical humanism and included the following topics: Problems of Cosmology and Ontology; Origin of Life; Reason and Nature; Foundation of Ethics; Historiology: Social evolution and its Dynamics; Freedom and Political Organization; and Economic Planning and Freedom. Each topic was introduced by a different speaker who had been notified in advance to come prepared with a paper; each introductory speech was followed by two or three sessions on the specific topic which lasted for the major part of the day; through his comments, interventions and concluding observations Roy would guide the discussions and provide a unified view. The participants included school teachers and university professors, research scholars, writers and journalists, lawyers, trade-union leaders, village-level workers, doctors and young students. For them the camp was a most memorable and inspiring experience, combining the rigorous discipline of systematic philosophical investigation with the informality and warmth of community living.

Besides lectures and study camps there were also conferences and conventions of the Radical Humanist Movement. At the same time Roy had to attend to the editing and regular publication of his weekly and quarterly periodicals. In April 1949 the name of *Independent India* was changed to *The Radical Humanist*, and in May 1951 the journal was shifted from Bombay to Calcutta. Since the old radicals at the former city were no longer able to cope with the mounting losses, and the younger followers at Calcutta were willing to take the responsibility. *The Marxian Way* was changed to *The Humanist Way* in August 1949. Both journals were all along run on a shoestring budget; often even the shoestring was missing. Their circulation was never large, and Roy's highly critical and often unpopular views did not commend themselves to advertising agencies or government patronage. Nevertheless, even in the worst financial straits, there was no break or delay at least in the publication of the weekly. Roy's own contributions always arrived punctually even during his lecture tours, and the journal gathered round itself bands of dedicated and unpaid editorial and managerial workers who ensured its regular appearance, first from Bombay, and subsequently from Calcutta.

Roy's contempt for and rejection of the bourgeoisie was not just theoretical; in his long career as a revolutionary he had never developed any taste for private property, savings or security. After his departure from Moscow in 1928, his two years and eight months in

Germany were a period of great hardship when he had to earn his meagre and precarious living mainly by commissioned translation work.[60] Nonetheless, this did not prevent him from completing during that same period his magnum opus, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, or from continuing with his unfinished big project, 'Decline and Fall'. He was virtually a pauper when he was released from jail, and *Independent India* was started with the little savings which Ellen Gottschalk had managed to bring with her to India. When in 1946 some of his colleagues and admirers raised a fund and purchased 13 Mohini Road at Dehradun to give it to the Roys, Roy flatly declined to have any personal property. Consequently the place was made over to the Indian Renaissance Institute which owned and administered it through its Board of Trustees. The Institute, however, had no resources to pay even a regular token honorarium to Roy, its Founder-Director. Nor was there at any time any question of *Independent India* or *The Radical Humanist* paying a salary to its editor. Even the publishing house which had been established at Calcutta in the 1940s under the name Renaissance Publishers, and which thereafter published all his books, rarely managed to pay him any royalty. Moneys derived from sales were usually ploughed back into production of new books. In any case the market for its books was limited and it had no sales organization. After the dissolution of the RDP, Roy, in addition to his strenuous schedule of work in connection with the Radical Humanist Movement, had also regularly to write commissioned articles for his livelihood for publication in largely circulated newspapers and foreign periodicals.

Memoirs and the 3 R

However, as in the late 1920s, Roy put the demanding situation to fruitful use. He wrote illuminating analyses and commentaries on current affairs, for example, 'Communism in Asia' and 'Democracy and Nationalism' in *Pacific Affairs*, or 'Indian Communists and the Elections' in the *Manchester Guardian*, or 'Party caucus and individual conscience' in the *Times Weekly Review*. But his more regular contributions now began to appear in the very well-known and popular English daily from Calcutta, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, the editor of which was a long-time admirer of Roy (though at no time a radical humanist). During the Comintern period many of Roy's articles were reprinted from *The Vanguard* and *The Masses* in the *Patrika*.[61] After his release from jail Roy frequently contributed to the *Patrika*, often on non-political themes. Now for the *Patrika* he not only wrote a series of brilliant sketches and estimates of some of the outstanding political figures of the twentieth century who were personally known to him (these sketches together with others were published as a book in 1968 under the title *Men I met*), he also agreed to record some recollections of the amazingly chequered political career that had been uniquely his. It required much persuasion since he had a strong reluctance to write about himself. But once started it grew into a marvellously detailed, vivid and absorbing account. It covered only a period of seven years (from his departure from India in 1915 to the publication of *India in Transition* in 1922) and did not mention Evelyn, his wife and principal collaborator during this period. Nonetheless, M. N. Roy's *Memoirs* is an outstanding, though incomplete, autobiography. Its importance as a source book cannot be overestimated; it provides the most informative account of Roy's life in Mexico and his early years in the Comintern. From the point of view of literary quality it is also one of his best pieces of writing. Serialized at first in *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, it was then reprinted in the *Radical Humanist* (February 1953 to September 1954), and published as a book ten years after Roy's death.

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[60] I learnt about this from Louise Geisseler, Ellen Roy, Rose Froelich, Claire Thalheimer, A. Bhaduri and others who were his associates during this period.

[61] Kaye, *Communism in India*, pp. 10–11, 15, 207.

Besides writing his *Memoirs*, the sketches of his political contemporaries, articles on current affairs, and regular weekly contributions to the *Radical Humanist*, Roy also began in 1948 to work on what would prove to be the last major intellectual project that he would live to accomplish. He wanted the philosophy of radical humanism (the main principles of which he had enunciated and elaborated between 1946 and 1948) to be put in the double context of modern man's intellectual history and of the moral crisis of our age. For him this intellectual history comprised philosophical movements and developments in the west from the time of the Renaissance which marked the beginning of the modern age; and the crisis made evident by the rise of fascism, communism and different varieties of moral nihilism and intellectual obscurantism which characterized the first half of the twentieth century. Radical humanism, Roy believed, drew its support from what was valuable in the history of modern philosophy and from the findings of twentieth-century science, and it suggested a way out of the moral, intellectual and institutional crisis of our times.

Over the years Roy had built up a nucleus of a research library at Mohini Road, and for this project he arranged to obtain on loan relevant additional works of reference from some of the university libraries in India where he had associates or admirers.[62] Although past sixty, he was still an incredibly hard worker, and his power of concentration was as extraordinary as was the scope of his imagination. Started in 1948, the fully written, revised and typed press copy of *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* was ready in April 1952. Like *Revolution and Counter-Revolution* it was a monumental work (638 pages); it attempted to combine a historical survey of Western thought with an elaboration of his own system of ideas. As Roy wrote in the preface to the work (which he dictated on 15 August 1952), 'On the basis of a humanist interpretation of cultural history, this work endeavours to outline a comprehensive philosophy which links up social and political practice with a scientific metaphysics of rationality and ethics'.

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[62] I was his intremediary for obtaining books on loan from the Central Library of the University of Calcutta where the late Professor Niharranjan Ray was most generous and co-operative. He also obtained books from Bombay, Lucknow and Delhi. For Roy's

Although the complete text of the book was received by me at Calcutta in April the Renaissance Publishers did not have the material resources to bring it out immediately in one volume. The texts had to be divided, with the author's consent into two nearly equal parts, and the first volume (308 pages) was published in August 1952. Roy did not live to see the publication of the second volume (330 pages) which came out in May 1955.

While working on the *RRR* volume Roy had established contacts with several humanist groups in Europe and America which held views in many respects similar to his own. The notion gradually evolved of these groups coming together and constituting an international association with commonly shared aims and principles. Among organizations which showed initiative in this regard were the Humanistisch Verbond of the Netherlands, the Indian Radical Humanist Movement, the British Humanist Association, the American Ethical Union and the American Humanist Association. Other groups which subsequently joined as either full members or members with consultative status included those from Belgium, West Germany, Norway, Denmark, France and Korea.[63] The Inaugural Congress of the International Humanist and Ethical Union was planned to be held in Amsterdam in August 1952, and the Roys were expected to have a seminal role in the Congress and in the development of the International Union.

In establishing and maintaining such contacts, as in most other practical and organizational matters, much of the labour was done and correspondence maintained by Ellen Roy who, since her marriage to Roy in 1937, had proved to be his closest and most unfailing

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personal collection of books in the late 1930s and early 1940s, M. N. Roy, *Library of a Revolutionary* (reprint), IRI Monograph 8, Calcutta, 1985.

[63] *The International Humanist and Ethical Union and its Member Organizations; Proceedings of the Second, London, 1957 and Third, Oslo, 1962 Congresses,* Utrecht, Netherlands.

associate. Whether it was the Party or the Movement, the *I.I.*, or the *R.H.*, the I.R.I. or the R.P., her share of work was considerable.[64] She now began preparations for their trip to Europe to be followed by Roy's lecture tour in the United States.

Accident and death

But before going abroad Roy needed some rest (the work on the *RRR* volume had been very taxing), and with Ellen he went up for a few days from Dehradun to the hill station of Mussoorie. A friend arranged for them a small cottage, some distance from the centre of the town, where they enjoyed walking along the winding hill-tracks. On 11 June morning after they had walked a couple of miles, on their way back Roy suddenly stumbled at the bend of a road, lost balance, and fell rolling down the steep hillside for fifty feet till the fall was stopped by a rock. Some ribs on the left side and the right foot were fractured and there were injuries to the head, face and hands. He was carried in a makeshift litter to their cottage where doctors were summoned. Although the shock was great, the doctors at first thought that the injuries were mainly external. After a few weeks he was moved down to Dehradun, and under treatment, he began to show signs of recovery. On 25 August however, he had the first attack of cerebral thrombosis resulting in a partial paralysis of the right side. Treatment and nursing supported by his strong will and love of life brought slow and gradual recovery in November, and in December he resumed reading and occasionally dictating short articles to Ellen. His new year message was published in the *Radical Humanist* of 11 January 1953, to be followed by a statement of 'Our Creed' in the issue of 11 February. During February he also wrote on 'Indo-Pakistan Relations', and on Stalin's death on 5 March he wrote an appraisal of 'the most hated, feared and maligned man of our time' which was published in the *Radical Humanist* of 15 March. Although strongly opposed to the dictatorial system in the Soviet Union, he nevertheless considered it fair to recognize that Stalin had 'led a numerous people inhabiting one-sixth of the globe out of medieval darkness and economic backwardness' and that it was Stalin's 'caution and wisdom which restrained the ardent advocates of world revolution' in Russia (like Zhdanov) from ordering the Red Army to try to overrun Western Europe at the end of the Second World War and thus from taking 'the risk of plunging into the third world war'. In a second article on 26 April titled 'Stalinism survives Stalin', he again spoke of Stalin's 'revisionism' and 'realism', and anticipated that his successors would follow Stalin's policy of peace abroad. To Roy's admirers and followers, these two articles constitute something of a puzzle since some of the views expressed in them do not seem to be consistent either with the position developed in the final section of the revised and enlarged edition of *The Russian Revolution*, or generally with his philosophy of radical humanism.

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[64] For details, S. N. Ray, ed., *The World Her Village*, pp. 1–46.

The accident in June 1952 had prevented the Roys from attending the Inaugural Congress of the I.H.E.U. in August in Amsterdam; the Congress, however, had elected Roy, in absentia, as one of its Vice Presidents and made the Indian Radical Humanist Movement one of the founder-members of the new international. The publication of the first volume of *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* and its enthusiastic reception and reviews in India and abroad established Roy as a major philosopher of humanism in the post-war world. There were invitations from institutions abroad, and by early May, 1953, Roy showed sufficient improvement to permit plans for a lecture-trip. Arrangements were also made for advanced medical treatment in the United States. It was decided to hold a reunion of Radical Humanists early in October 1953 after which the Roys were to take the boat from Bombay.

During 1953 Roy's 'Memoirs' was being serialized in the *Radical Humanist*. In response to pressing requests from readers Roy agreed to write some new chapters which would contain recollections of the early years of his life. He drew up a tentative plan, indicated that the 'Memoirs' as a whole would be published under the title 'In Quest of Freedom' and wrote an introductory chapter, 'Disintegration of a Priestly Family', which described his visit to the village of his ancestors.[65] And then on 15 August he had the second attack of cerebral thrombosis which paralyzed the left side of his body. The struggle for recovery was resumed; improvements were followed by setbacks, however, in December, though still bedridden and in great pain, he was able to talk and read a little. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru visited him on 12 December and they had a brief and friendly conversation. Roy even managed to dictate to Ellen an article for the *Radical Humanist* early in the new year; it was about the nature and organization of the Radical Humanist Movement which was to be discussed at the next reunion. This last message was published in the issue of 24 January 1954. Thus virtually to the very end, despite the terrible accident, two attacks of cerebral thrombosis and consequent paralysis first of the right side and, after recovery, of the left side, and the intense suffering which was his for the last one year and eight months, his mind was occupied with that unending quest with which he had begun his career as a rebellious schoolboy. On 25 January, ten minutes before midnight, M .N. Roy died of a heart attack which had occurred earlier during the day. According to an eye witness account, 'there was no trace of pain on his face, it was quiet and calm and serene'.

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[65] *The Radical Humanist*, 7 February 1954.

At his death M .N. Roy was nearly 67. He had taken an active and prominent part in several of the major political upheavals of this century. For more than fifty years he had been a dedicated fighter in the cause of human freedom. He had experienced many setbacks, failures and betrayals; rarely did he have any respite from persecution or calumny or insecurity; and yet in his long career he never lost his faith in man's ability to shape history, nor did he allow his commitment to truth, freedom and social justice to be dimmed or obscured by hostile circumstances. A lifelong revolutionary, he was also a thinker of great originality and acute perception. According to the American political scientist Robert C. North, 'Roy ranks with Lenin and Mao Tse-Tung in the development of fundamental Communist policy for the underdeveloped, as contrasted with the industrialized, areas of the globe'.[66] This is why nearly forty years after his death Soviet academicians still continue to be troubled by Roy's heterodox views during the 1920s on nationalism, colonialism and revolution.[67] His major works of that period, from *India in Transition* to *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China*, remain seminal contributions to Marxist historiography. With reference to the final phase of his life, the British philosopher H. J. Blackham described him as 'a materialist on fire' and the Indian savant Tarkateerth Laxman Shastri Joshi acclaimed him as the 'first philosopher of modern India'.[68] Roy had a global vision of humanity moving in the direction of greater freedom and co-operation, despite many internal and external obstacles. The inspiring example of his life and the philosophy of radical humanism which he formulated and developed in the last phase may be viewed as significant constituents of that noble vision of human history.

Prefatory Notes to the Contents of Volume One

Before he went abroad Narendra Nath Bhattacharya used to contribute regularly to the Bengali organs of the militant nationalists and the occasional publications of the revolutionary underground.[69] A small portion of this literature has been retrieved, but the revolutionaries did not put their names to their writings, and it is now virtually impossible to determine with certainty who authored which particular piece of work. According to Saralabala Sarkar several of Naren's contributions were included in the series *Mukti Kon Pathe*, published from Jugantar office by Abinas Chandra Bhattacharya. However, no writing of this period is included in this volume.

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[66] North and Eudin, *M. N. Roy's Mission to China*, p. 1.

[67] Ulyanovsky, *The Comintern and the East*, vols. 1, 3; Reznikov, *The Comintern and the East Persits, Revolutionaries of India*.

[68] S. N. Ray (ed.), *M. N. Roy: Philosopher-Revolutionary* (1984), pp. 178–9.

[69] Ibid., p. 27.

The first work of Roy to be published under his name which we have been able to find is 'Carta Abierta'. The introduction to the Spanish text mentioned that the 'Open Letter' was originally written in English and circulated in the United States a year before the publication of the Spanish version from Mexico. I have not found the original English text. The Spanish version was published first as a pamphlet, and subsequently included in the book *La Voz de La India* (1918) constituting pp. 25–68 of that book. *La Voz* (total 80 pages) included two other pieces, the first a refutation of a pro-British booklet 'The Awakening of India' ('El Despertar de la India', pp. 3–23) and the second a nationalist answer to the question 'Why do Indian Soldiers fight for England?' ('Por que los soldados indios luchan por Inglaterra?' pp. 69–80). Only the 'Open Letter' is included here as item 1; the translation from the Spanish version has been made specially for this edition and it has not been published before.

Roy's second major publication in Spanish is *La India Su Pasado, Su Presente y Su Porvenir* (India Her Past, Present and Future). According to the preface, this book (VI + p. 198) was published just before Christmas, 1918. From considerations of space I have included not the entire text but a major portion of the book as item 2. In this case too the translation has been made specially for this edition and is previously unpublished. Selections from the two books represent Roy's thinking of the period before he had been converted to Marxism. Excluded passages from *La India* have been indicated in the translated version.

Besides *Carta Abierta* and *La Voz*, *La India* also listed another work 'by the same author', *El Camino para la Paz duradera del Mundo* (The Way to Durable World Peace). In his *Memoirs* Roy at one place wrote that *El Camino* was the title of his Spanish translation of the 'Open Letter to President Wilson'. This is obviously a slip of memory since in the *La India* announcement *El Camino* is mentioned as a separate work from *Carta Abierta*. Elsewhere in the *Memoirs*, however, Roy gave a brief account of the 'longish chapter on the origin of the Monroe Doctrine and its development in practice during nearly a hundred years' which he had added to the original text of his 'Open Letter'.[70]

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[70] M. N.Roy's *Memoirs*, pp. 29 and 123–5. Roy also mentioned in the *Memoirs* that 'the chapter on the Monroe Doctrine written for my book first appeared as a series of articles in *El Heraldo de Mexico*' p. 125.

Very probably this additional chapter constituted *El Camino* and was published as a separate booklet. When Roy wrote his *Memoirs*, he did not have with him any copy of his Mexican writings. I have not succeeded so far in tracing a copy of *El Camino*.

During his stay in Mexico Roy also contributed to *El Pueblo, El Heraldo de Mexico* and to an English language journal, *Gale's Magazine*. The last named periodical was started and owned by the American 'slacker' or draft-dodger named Linn A. E. Gale who had escaped from New York to Mexico in 1918. The article 'Hunger and Revolution in India', item 3 in this volume was published in *Gale's Magazine* (August 1919, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 9 and 25) which described the author Manabendra Nath Roy as 'Representative of the Indian Nationalist Party'. The same issue of this journal contained what was described as 'a tentative platform of the National Socialist Party' of Mexico, and in its next issue (September, 1919, Vol. III No. 2) was published a heavily biased account of the First National Congress of the Mexican Socialist Party held from 25 August to 4 September. Linn Gale had asked Roy for financial help which was refused; instead, as already mentioned, Roy bought a printing press for the socialist organ. Gale in his account of the Congress made a bitter personal attack on Roy. In opposition to the Communist Party of Mexico founded by Roy, Rose Allen, Charles Philips and others, he started a rival Communist party which, however, failed to win recognition from the Comintern.

Item 4 in this volume is reproduced from the Weekly Report of the Director, Criminal Intelligence, Simla, dated 2 August 1920 (National Archives, Home Political File No. 110, 'The Bolshevik Menace'). On the way from Mexico to Moscow Roy and Evelyn spent about four months (January–April, 1920) in Berlin where they made friends with the founders of the German Communist Party. Here Roy wrote 'An Indian Communist Manifesto' which was published in the *Glasgow Socialist*. The Weekly Report of the Director, Criminal Intelligence, gave an abridged version of the *Manifesto*. The importance of this document derives from the fact that it is the earliest known piece of writing in which Roy indicated the position which he would take at the Second Congress of the Comintern and develop in his writings of the 1920s. The influence of the Spartacist school of Marxism is already in evidence here. Although Abani Mukherji and Santi Devi (pen-name of Evelyn Roy) were included as co-signatories to the Manifesto, intelligence reports and corroborative evidence leave no doubt that the Manifesto was drafted solely by Roy.

The Roys arrived in Moscow in May 1920 where Roy was given a copy of Lenin's 'Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and Colonial Questions'. Since Roy's views on these issues differed in certain fundamental respects from Lenin's, he was asked by the latter to formulate his ideas in the form of a set of Supplementary Theses. The Second Congress of the Comintern which met from 19 July to 7 August appointed a special commission on 24 July to consider both drafts. The Commission included representatives of Russia, Bulgaria, France, Holland, Germany, Hungary, the U.S.A., India, Persia, China, Korea and Britain. The Dutch Communist H. J. Sneevliet (alias Maring) was chosen as its Secretary. Important amendments were made to both drafts during the sittings of the Commission, and on 26 July both sets of theses as amended were presented for discussion to the fifth plenary session of the Congress. The discussion was introduced by Lenin who was followed by Maring and Roy. It was continued on 28 July (sixth plenary session), and both sets of theses were adopted, Roy's unanimously but Lenin's with three abstentions (Serrati, Pestana and Graziadei).[71]

We have reproduced here as item 5 the original draft of Roy's supplementary theses since it stated his position much more clearly than the amended version. We have also reproduced portions of the Proceedings of the Second Congress of the Communist International as given in the English version brought out by the 'Publishing office of the Communist International, America, 1921'. Verbatim reports of the speeches of Lenin and Roy at the Fifth Session (26 July evening) are included, these constitute pp. 111–23 of the published Volume of the Proceedings (item 6).

After the Congress a Provisional All-India Central Revolutionary Committee was formed in Moscow with Roy as Chairman. He was sent to Tashkent as Secretary of Turkestan Bureau, and from there he reported the founding of the Communist Party of India. His letter and minutes are item 7 in this Volume. The emigré Communist Party was reconstituted in Moscow early in 1921.

Roy's Supplementary Theses had been adopted by the Comintern, but he had yet to develop and present in some detail his 'view of the nature and perspective of the Indian revolution'. After the Third Congress of the Comintern where differences were again expressed in the Eastern Commission, he decided to elaborate his theses in the form of a full-length study. According to the account given in his *Memoirs*, he obtained in 1921 through the Soviet Trade Delegation in London a stack of Blue Books published by the Government of India, and wrote out on the basis of material contained in those publications a report on the structure of the Indian economy. 'The report had emphasized the fact, that although colonial economy tended to galvanize feudal relations, it could not altogether prevent the growth of native capitalism and the consequent rise of the bourgeoisie as an ambitious class. The established order, to some extent, thwarted their ambition. But at the same time, they had stakes in the *status quo*, and therefore could not lead a revolution for its subversion.'[72]

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[71] Jane Degras, *The Communist International*, Vol. 1, pp. 138–9; *Proceedings of the Second Congress; Zer Zweite Kongress der Kommunist Internationale*, Hamburg, 1921; *Vtoroi Kongress Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala'* pp. 122–6. That 'in the Commission . . . Roy's theses enjoyed at least as much sympathy as those of Lenin' and that 'Lenin's theses emerged from the Commission with a number of amendments' are mentioned by E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, Vol. 3, p. 256.

Roy was advised by Lenin to develop the report into a book and thus he came to write his first major treatise on India as a Marxist. For the statistical material used in the first chapter of the book he relied on abstracts prepared at his instance by Abani Mukherji from the Government of India publications. The actual writing and argument of the book, however, were entirely Roy's. He generously acknowledged Mukherji's collaboration in the title page of the book, but even Roy's severest detractors do not question Roy's full authorship of the book.

The writing of *India in Transition* was completed in October 1921, and its first chapter was published in the December issue of the *Communist International*. A Russian edition was published from Moscow early in 1922. Roy moved to Berlin in March, where he now set up his headquarters and he got the original English text published from there in April in the name of a fictitious publisher (Edition de la Librairie J. B. Target) in Geneva. A German edition of 100,000 copies was brought out from Hamburg in September by Verlag der Kommunistischen Internationale and it sold out within a year. Copies of the original English edition were intercepted in India in August, and its entry and circulation banned by the government in September 1922.

India in Transition was recognized instantaneously on publication as a Marxist classic, and until Roy's break with the Comintern it was used as the most authoritative textbook on modern India by Communists everywhere. However, being a proscribed book it was not available in the open market. Copies were circulated clandestinely, and the readership was not limited to Communists alone. The first open Indian impression (1971) came out long after Roy's death, but that too has been out of print for quite some time. Taking into account its intrinsic worth and historic significance, we have reproduced the full text of the 1922 edition which constitutes item 8 in this volume.

From his headquarters in Berlin Roy brought out on 15 May 1922 the first issue of his fortnightly, *The Vanguard of Indian Independence*.

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[72] M. N. Roy's *Memoirs*, p. 552.

There were four pages per issue with three columns in each page. The masthead carried the declaration: 'Revolution for the masses—not the masses for the revolution'. According to details provided in the paper, it was published by B. L. Sing from Liverpool and printed by Cambden Press, London. Its postal address was Box No. 4336, Zurich 16, Switzerland; and it had offices in Berlin, Paris, London, Zurich and Rome. The price of a single copy was two annas while its annual subscription was four rupees. The journal was, in fact, published from Berlin, and copies were mailed from various ports in Europe to a number of addresses in India. A large number of copies was also sent through personal emissaries. From its very first issue, the journal made a strong impact on a section of India's politicized intelligentsia. Many periodicals like the daily *Amrita Bazar Patrika, Atma Sakti, Dhumketu, Desher Bani, The Independent, Aj, Vartaman, Navayugam* reproduced, translated or made free use of its articles.[73] According to Government of India Intelligence Department reports, 'about 1,000 copies are believed to be sent each fortnight' to India. In September, 1922, many copies were intercepted in Bombay and Calcutta and the journal was banned in India by the government.[74] Altogether there were 9 issues of *The Vanguard of Indian Independence*, the last issue being that of 15 September 1922. Item 9 consists of selections from these issues.

Roy sought to meet the ban by changing the name of his journal to *The Advance-Guard*. The printer's name and address now became Emerald Press, 22 St. Patrick Road, Dublin. The first issue of *The Advance-Guard* came out on 1 October 1922, and fortnightly issues under that name were published regularly till 1 February 1923, when the name was again changed to *The Vanguard* from the issue of 15 February. There were altogether nine fortnightly issues of *The Advance-Guard* which proclaimed on the masthead of the front page of each issue its credo: *A New Principle A New Party A New Programme*. Copies of the journal in large bundles were dispatched through Indian sailors from Marseilles to various ports in India; in this arrangement Roy was assisted by the French Communist Party, and in particular by one of its young leaders, P. Vaillant-Couturier (1892–1937), who would later become editor-in-chief of the French Communist Party organ, *L'Humanite*.[75]

Item 10 in the present volume consists of a few selected pieces from *The Advance-Guard*. The journal continued to be published under Roy's editorship up to April 1928, but its name had to be changed several times. From 15 February to 1 December 1923 it appeared as

[73] Kaye, *Communism in India*, pp. 15–16; Petrie, *Communism in India*, pp. 16, 35.

[74] Kaye, *Communism in India*, pp. 207, 239; *The Vanguard*, September 15, 1922.

[75] Kaye, *Communism in India*, p. 16.

The Vanguard Central Organ Communist Party of India. From 15 December 1923 it reverted to the original name *The Vanguard of Indian Independence* and this was continued till 15 December 1924. In July 1924, 'the French authorities in Pondicherry seized a large consignment of Roy's literature—1,400 copies of The Vanguard and 300 of Roy's pamphlets'.[76] In January 1925, the journal was converted to a monthly under a new name, *The Masses of India,* and the last issue under this name which I have been able to trace is dated April, 1928.

In 1922 Roy wrote and published, besides *India in Transition*, two other books, *India's Problem and its Solution* and *What do we Want*?, copies of which were intercepted in India in November and December, 1922.[77] In *India in Transition* Roy had given a Marxist analysis of the Indian situation and 'prospective developments', and he had promised in the introduction to that book that 'the question of practical politics and the formulation of a programme commensurate with the nature recently revealed by the movement, will have to be dealt with in a subsequent work'.[78] *What do we Want* was the promised work which explained the inter-relatedness of the phases in the struggle against exploitation and oppression—from political independence to economic and finally 'complete and unconditional social emancipations'. This was published from Berlin in the autumn of 1922 under the imprint of the same fictitious publisher of Geneva, and it was intercepted and banned by the government of India in December, 1922. Selections from *What do we Want* constitute item 11 in this volume. Item 12 consists of selections from the other booklet *India's Problem and its Solution* which explained the urgent need for 'a political party of the masses . . . for carrying forward the struggle for national liberation'.

Roy's considerable achievements as a theorist and organizer were given formal recognition at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern which elected him to the Executive Committee as a candidate member representing 'eastern countries'; among other elected candidate-members were Lenin and Trotsky. The Congress met from 5 November to 5 December 1922 and was attended by 408 delegates (343 with full voting rights) from 58 countries.[79] The recession of revolutionary forces in the West and the concessions and compromises made under the New Economic Policy in the Soviet Union since April, 1921 determined the temper of its deliberations. According to the report published in *The Advance-Guard*, 'the Eastern Question' was under discussion since the beginning of the Congress.[80] The leaders of the Comintern recognized that the proletariat in the West 'has lost faith in its ability to seize power in any foreseeable future', but there was a vigorous upsurge of mass unrest throughout Asia.[81] Bukharin spoke of 'colonial uprisings as a part of the global struggle against capitalism', and Zinoviev made special mention of Roy's periodical and his success in gathering together 'communist elements in India'.[82] However, although the importance of Asia was recognized, the preoccupation of the Comintern with developments in the West and the rough and ready manner in which the Eastern Question was being handled in the Congress provoked a formal protest from a number of participants which included delegates from Japan, Turkey, Egypt, Persia, Mexico, India, Indonesia, England and Australia.[83]

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[76] Petrie, *Communism in India*, p. 60.

[77] Kaye, *Communism in India*, p. 207.

[78] M. N. Roy, *India in Transition*, Genève, 1922, p. 15.

[79] Degras, *The Communist International*, Vol. I, pp. 374 and 455.

During the Congress a regular Bulletin was published by the Press Bureau of the Comintern (20th Government Printery 'The Red Proletarian') which reported the proceedings and principal speeches of each session.[84] There were altogether thirty-two Bulletins covering thirty-two sessions. The first Bulletin was published on 16 November reporting the opening session of 5 November, and the final Bulletin was published on 9 December. The nineteenth session where Roy spoke on the Eastern Question was reported in Bulletin no. 19 of 1 December; the text of his speech occupied pages 22 to 28 of this issue of the Bulletin. At the twentieth session (23 November) a Commission was appointed 'for the examination of the theses and resolutions on the Eastern Question previous to their being brought before the Congress'. The Commission consisted of Roy (India), Radek and Safarov (Russia), Ravensteyn (Holland), Webb (Great Britain), Salleh (Turkey), Katayama (Japan), Malaka (Java), Chan-du-Sha (China),

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[80] *The Advance-Guard*, Vol. 1 No. 6 (15 December 1922), No. 7 (1 January 1923); for earlier announcement of the forthcoming Congress, M. N. Roy, 'A World Congress', *The Vanguard*, Vol. 1 No. 8 (1 September 1922).

[81] For the Fourth Congress, *Protokoll des IV Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale*, Hamburg, 1923; *Bulletin Nos. 1–32 of the Fourth Congress*, Moscow, 1922; *Fourth Congress of the Communist International*, Abridged Report, CPGB, London, n.d. (? 1923); *Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress*, CPGB, London, n.d. (? 1923). The quotation is from Karl Radek's speech, *Protokoll* p. 317.

[82] *Fourth Congress Abridged Report*, p. 26; *Inprecor*, II, No. 100.

[83] *Protokoll des IV Kongresses*. For comments on the discussions on the Eastern Question at the Fourth Congress, X. J. Eudin and R. C. North, *Soviet Russia and the East 1920–27*, Stanford, 1957, pp. 147–52; A. S. Whiting, *Soviet Policies in China 1917–1924*, New York, 1957, pp. 92–100. Roy and others had also strongly objected to the conspicuous lack of interest in the Eastern Question among Comintern leaders at the 3rd Congress, *Protokoll* III, p. 1016.

[84] *Bulletin of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International*, Nos. 1–32, 12 November to 12 December 1922, Moscow.

Isakov (Bulgaria) and Cachin (France).[85] The Theses on the Eastern Question were moved at the last session of the Congress by the Chairman and adopted unanimously.

In his speech, besides stressing the importance of the revolutionary forces in Asia, Roy warned the Comintern against its erroneous 'bundling' of the Eastern countries 'together into one category', against the uninformed habit of taking the Eastern countries 'as a homogeneous whole either politically or economically or socially' He distinguished between three categories in terms of relative development, and reasserted his view that in the case of the first category (which included India) there was 'a triangular fight developing . . . a fight which is directed at the same time against foreign imperialism and the native upper class'. He maintained that the anti-imperialist national revolutionary struggle could be carried out only 'under the leadership of a political party representing the workers and peasants'. His views were opposed by the Dutch delegate Van Ravesteyn and the Indonesian Communist Tan Malaka. Malaka wanted Comintern approval of pan-Islamism in general, and of an alliance between the Communist Party of Indonesia and the Sarekat Islam, and he was supported by Ravesteyn.[86] The Chinese delegate Liu-Yen-Ching wanted the Communist Party of China to join the Kuomintang.[87]

The Theses on the Eastern Question, adopted by the Fourth Congress, upheld Roy's position in much of its phraseology. The draft was presumably written by Roy who was also the principal reporter in the open session. Nevertheless, the Theses, as moved and adopted, were a collective product, and 'the contradiction, so evident at the Second Congress, between Roy's emphasis on class conflict and Lenin's concept of tactical cooperation with nationalist revolutionaries'[88] was not resolved. The contradiction would continue to plague the Communist movement, and even today it seems to have much more than historical interest.

[85] *Bulletin of the Fourth Congress*, No. 20, 28 November 1922, p. 19.

[86] *Bulletin of the Fourth Congress*, No. 19; *Bericht IV Kongress*, pp. 131–2: *Protokoll IV Kongress*, pp. 590, 607, 979–988. Tan Malaka's view of discussion on the Eastern Question is quoted in translation by Ruth T. Mcvey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, Ithaca, New York, 1965, pp. 160–2 from Malaka's *Dari Pendjara Ke Pendjara*, I, pp. 99–101.

[87] *Protokoll IV Kongress*, p. 615. Also Eudin and North, *Soviet Russia and the East*, pp. 147–51; A. S. Whiting, *Soviet Policies in China*, pp. 92–100; Jane Degras, *The Communist International*, Vol. 1, pp. 382–3. In the *Bulletin of the Congress* the name of the Chinese member of the Eastern Commission is given as Chan-du-Sha. This is probably a corrupted form of the name of the celebrated Chinese scholar and founder of the Chinese Communist Party, Chien Tu-Hsiu, who atteneded the Fourth Congress. In the Congress however the talking on behalf of the Chinese delegation was done mainly by Liu Yen-Ch'ing who was one of twelve present at the First Chinese Communist Party Congress in July 1921.

[88] X. J. Eudin and R. C. North, *Soviet Russia and the East*, p. 151.

SELECTED WORKS

1917–1919

1. Carta Abierta a su Excelencia Woodrow Wilson, Presidente de los Estados Unidos de Norteamerica (Open Letter to His Excellency Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of North America)
2. La India, Su Pasado, Su Presente y Su Porvenir (India Her Past, Present and Future)
3. Hunger and Revolution in India

Open Letter To His Excellency Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of America*

Introduction

We reproduce here the Spanish version of the letter written to President Wilson. The original was written in English and circulated in the United States a year ago when, immediately after entering the war, the U.S. government initiated persecution and later on sent to jail a group of Indian patriots who were political refugees. They were accused of 'violating neutrality'. Since this letter contains a general description of the British Government in India and defines clearly the character and development of the revolutionary movement, I present it to the Mexican people whom I thank for their sympathy and understanding for our cause.

Mexico D.F. M. N. Roy

Honorable Sir:

We hope that the following lines, which come from 'one of the astute people of the Orient', will receive your attention and thought for a moment. The idea of writing to Your Excellency is inspired by your speeches and writings as an educator, philosopher and executive head of a great democracy. Together with all weak and oppressed peoples of the world we see in you a protector and a sympathizer of our hopes. It is easy to explain the hostile attitude of the American press towards the cause of Indian Independence because behind that attitude one can see the dictates of its masters. But we, the representatives of the nationalist movement of India, are astonished that a person of your high thinking would express sentiments against our efforts which aim at the same freedom towards which you have repeatedly said you are striving to guide the world through the cataclysm of the war.

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* Translated from *La Voz de la India* por M. N. Roy, Mexico, D. F., undated, pp. 25–68. Original English version 1917, Spanish version 1918, retranslated from the Spanish into English. All quotations in the 'Letter' from sources in English have been retranslated here from the Spanish version in 'Carta Abierta'. S.N.R.

The National Movement of India is not Sedition

We would be wrong to doubt your knowledge of history, but in your speech on Flag Day (1917) you accused the German Government of 'having plans of sedition and rebellion in India and Egypt and of having started hostilities in Persia', and we thought that hatred of the enemy had dimmed the clarity of your vision. Let us hope that this was temporary. Except an English bureaucrat, no honest man, who is properly informed, would call the Nationalist Movement 'seditious and rebellious'; on the other hand 'the fire in Persia' that devoured the growth of democracy in such an old country was lighted and kept alive by your cousins with the help of the now defunct Tzarist regime.

Indian Unrest is not of German Origin

Since the war started, it has become fashionable among official propagandists and responsible statesmen of England and high officers, executives and court officials to denounce the National Movement as a 'German plot'. This is plainly a lie, full of malice. Whoever believes such a wild theory adds a new offence to the insult we are suffering. The movement, which aims at liberating India, is as old as the British Empire. The British tyranny in India, founded on perfidy, falsity and perjury, and maintained by means of brutal force has been hated universally by the Indians. They have never been reconciled to the iron yoke that oppressed them, and every time they have had the opportunity, they have proved their hostility to the foreign rule.

India has fought for her Freedom since the beginning of the British Occupation

Our country, which had become almost liberated from the Moslem Empire, but which was still disorganized and divided into different states, which had not yet been properly developed and brought under the central authority of a Federal Government, was the victim of the intrigues of Clive and Hastings, which were backed by the British Government. The history of the Revolution of 1857 has still to the written. The world knows very little about the Machiavellian methods and barbarous cruelty with which England suppressed the heroic fight for the freedom of a country. Due to the work of English historians, everyone knows about the 'infamous Nana Sahib' and the 'Slaughter of Cawnpore'. But who has heard of the orders of the British commanders? Who has heard of those horrifying orders 'Hang from the next tree' carried out with characteristic Anglo-Saxon thoroughness, and the thousands and thousands of trees with their macabre fruits; and not only men being hanged but also innocent women and children? And who has ever recorded the blowing-up of hundreds of patriots bound to the mouths of British canons?

A period of reaction followed the bloody repression of the revolution of 1857. After that began the age of intense nationalism that dates from the end of the last century. The unrest spread all over the country and burst into flames during the administration of the arrogant Lord Curzon at the beginning of this century. Since then, the history of India is purely that of the heroic fight of a hungry and unarmed people trying to liberate themselves from the iron claw of a foreign tyrant who wants to strangle those patriotic aims. The revolutionaries are hunted, hanged, exiled to penal settlements for life or condemned to forced labour in prison for long periods.

Children are beaten because they sing national hymns; the press is gagged, public speeches forbidden, and the right of meetings suppressed. In a word, the Indian people are terrorized by the weapons of power and injustice.

Since we are a peace-loving people, we waited very long putting our trust in 'the justice and sense of honour' of the British people, but the reward of our faith has been an increase in the oppression, humiliation, and slow death of an entire nation, caused by hunger, epidemics and the killing pressure of poverty.

These patriots, who aim at the salvation of their motherland, have dared to defy the British Empire and have declared their determination to regain the country's freedom. Great Britain, which professes now to be 'fighting for the freedom of small countries', calls the Nationalist Movement of India 'sedition and anarchy' and tries to alienate from us the sympathy of the world, condemning our cause as if it were a 'German plot', thus seeking to suppress what is owing to us in the name of humanity and justice.

The English Oppression and the Indian Nationalist Movement existed before the War

The war between England and Germany started not even three years ago; the Nationalist Movement is thirty years old, but it became an active revolutionary struggle with the outbreak of the war. Long before the clash of power shook the peace of Europe, the Indian martyrs who tried to liberate their country from the foreign yoke had been hanged by the British Government; many years before the inception of the fantastic theory of the German plot, Indian jails were filled with revolutionary leaders. The British Government was so sure of the loyalty of the Indian people that since 1857 all weapons possessed by the Indians have been confiscated and banned under 'The Arms Act'. This Act, so strict already from the outset, has been revised at least six times. In 1909 it was proclaimed that the mere fact of being in possession of a common knife longer than twelve inches was criminal and was punishable by imprisonment. Moreover, it is not permitted to carry a walking stick longer than three feet and thicker than one inch. Six years have elapsed since the proclamation of the 'Explosive Substances Act'. Under this Act, the sale, acquisition or possession, even in small quantities, of potassium chloride, carbolic acid and similar substances is forbidden. Several decrees based on the 'Indian Press Act' silenced twenty revolutionary newspapers and magazines; under the 'Seditious Meetings Act' nationalist demonstrations in public streets were forbidden. Under this tyrannic rule, that was given the character of law, policemen even of the lowest rank could put into jail, without being authorized, any group of more than three people, simply because they had come together. The 'Conspiracy Law' (1909) was promulgated and used by the British Government to ban and dissolve thousands of clubs and associations that had been organized all over the country to provide young people with physical education. The Nationalist leaders were deported without trial. All this happened before the War. The following is a list of the most prominent political trials before the War. In these trials hundreds of revolutionaries were condemned to death, penal servitude, or prison for a long period, on the charge of 'having made war against the king':

1. the trial of Changripota; 2. the trial of the Bomb Factory in Alipore; 3. the trial of Bahra; 4. the trial of Bighati; 5. a series of trials in Rawalpindi where martial law was enforced; 6. the trial for Mutiny during the Janmastami celebration at Dacca; 7. the trial for the murder of Ashe in Madras; 8. the political trial of Connore; 9. the trial for throwing bombs in Tinavelly; 10. several other trials for manufacturing bombs in the Madras Presidency; 11. the trial for the murder of Jackson; 12. the trial for Conspiracy in Poona; 13. the Howrah political trial; 14. the trial for Conspiracy in Dacca; 15. the Khulna political trial; 16. the trial for Conspiracy in Khulna; 17. the trial for Conspiracy in Faridpore; 18. the trial for Conspiracy in Barisal etc., etc.

It is necessary to note that all this happened between 1907 and 1914. During this period other trials of minor importance in which the revolutionaries were accused of political murder, of delivering public speeches, of circulating pamphlets and printing booklets were innumerable.

These facts are sufficient to demonstrate the 'loyalty' of India towards her oppressors before the war and of her attitude of calm reconciliation. In fact even British writers have admitted the gravity of the situation. Mr Valentine Chirol, renowned British journalist, wrote: 'Unrest in various degrees and forms has always existed in India and has reached now severe proportions'. (*Indian Unrest,* 1913.)

Opinions of Outstanding Americans About the Situation in India

We are going to quote some opinions of prominent American observers about the Indian Nationalist Movement to prove that the latter is not a sporadic phenomenon caused by foreign instigation but is the authentic expression of the feeling of the people:

'To attribute the present unrest in India to a superficial excitement provoked by irresponsible agitators is quite wrong. The present situation in India illustrates the many bad consequences of the political dependence of a civilized country. The continuation of the present policy will mean total destruction and degeneration of national life or end of the British rule'. (Paul S. Reinsch, Plenipotentiary Minister of the U.S.A. in the Republic of China.)

'Mr Roosevelt should know about this and his vast and profound understanding of American sympathies will inform him that America will sympathize with the Indians when the fight for freedom starts' (*Evening Journal*, Chicago, 20th January 1909).

'Freedom of public speech and meetings is allowed only under severe restrictions and hateful espionage, and freedom of the press is repressed. Now about one hundred publishers and other men of influence in public life are in jail with sentences from one to ten years' imprisonment, many of them without trial, and many others without having been informed of the reason of their imprisonment. Recently, in the course of one week, nine prominent men were arrested and secretly deported without any charge or trial. In most cases, when prisoners are at all informed of their crime, they are told they are accused of sedition; if someone in India tries to remedy or point out the injustices suffered by the country, he is accused of sedition. There is no Indian home that is not exposed to violation by the brutal force of secret policemen at any time of the day or night. There is no Indian gentleman, no matter how high his position or how irreproachable his behaviour, who is not exposed to the possibility of being arrested and taken to an unknown prison'. (From the Open Letter to Theodore Roosevelt, when he was President of the U.S.A., signed by a considerable number of American citizens.)

'A question that should be considered seriously is whether the resentment accumulated over a long period of time and generated by European aggressions in the Eastern nations, especially in India, could be placated, before running the risk of a war, unless adequate restitution is made'. (William J. Gaynor, ex-Lord Mayor of New York.)

'It is well known that educated Indians have a strong and growing desire for self-government. Their education would not have any value if it did not promote this legitimate aspiration. Education gives rise to rebellion against foreign rule. Looking carefully at Indian affairs, I notice that this feeling has grown rapidly over the last few years. Therefore, let us give up false judgements about Indian problems. If there is coercion they will enact anew the historic role that had once been enacted by America. The problem is domestic, not external. The wolf is in India, not outside'. (Andrew Carnegie in *The 19th Century and After*, August, 1906.)

'Because of their arrogance and egoism, their lack of sympathy and understanding, the British have sown discontent extensively in the minds of three hundred million Indian subjects of the British Crown. They have sown disloyalty and hatred. You may call it fanaticism, you may despise it as cowardice, or say whatever you want, but the reality is that a new phase in the fight for freedom in India is spreading very quickly'. (Paul Kennedy, in *The Forum*, February, 1910).

We trust that the preceding passages will convince Your Excellency that the British rule in India is not beneficial and that the country is not satisfied with the present political situation. The government of India is more arbitrary and despotic than the hated Tsarist regime which had at least two features in its favour compared to the situation in India. The officials in Russia were Russians, whereas Indian affairs are administered by a foreign bureaucracy that has no knowledge of our traditions and feelings. The Russian Government, although despotic, spent all the income in the country, whereas India is exhausted by the drain of her wealth which is taken out of the country by foreign collectors. India has to send annually to England 150,000,000 gold pesos to pay for the luxury of having the British yoke as a form of government, as well as the enormous expense of supporting the foreign bureaucracy in the country. The Russians, after a long fight, have overthrown the power that governed them against their own will, and the world has hailed the triumph of freedom and democracy. The United States of America is doing whatever is possible to help the young democracy. So why do you deny to the people of India the traditional right of self-government? That fundamental right is the basis of the Declaration of Independence of your country and is confirmed on each page of the Constitution of the United States.

British Vandalism, Not the German, is the Cause of the Indian Unrest

The Nationalist Movement is not 'a sedition or rebellion' brought about by any foreign force with the outbreak of the European conflict. If the Indian unrest finds expression in any conspiracy, then the cause of the conspiracy is to be found not in some external agent but in the cruel British policy that has been cold-bloodedly killing the Indian people for many years.

The Theory that England brought a Higher Civilization and a Better Government to India is False

From the evidence presented here, Your Excellency will see why it is impossible for the Indian people to be loyal to England. The so-called conquest of India by England is a historical event the nature of which has been obscured by biased writers, and we do not have room to discuss this point in this letter. In support of our view, we do, however, say that the theory that England kindly took possession of India to give her a superior degree of civilization and a better government is false and cannot be sustained in the face of historical criticism. Those demagogues who propagate this theory compare the India of the last two centuries with present-day Europe. But what was the political and social condition, not to mention the ethical and religious condition of the European countries when the counterfeiter Clive and the plunderer Hastings brought the light of Western civilization to India? Much has been said about the insecurity of life and property during the reigns of the Mahommedan kings, but not even the worst of them conferred honours on thieves and professional pirates like those received by Drake and Hawkins in the reign of Elizabeth of England. Much has been said about the tyranny of Mogul emperors, but was this tyranny worse than that of Charles V, Philip II, Henry VIII, Catherine de Medici, Louis XV or Mary Tudor? The most turbulent days in the history of India do not remind us of anything similar to the Inquisition in Spain or Holland or to the savage act of burning Protestants during the reign of 'Bloody' Queen Mary of England. In as far as the administration of domestic affairs in India in the pre-British period is concerned, let us give the floor to the British authors themselves:

'They are small self-governed republics which have provoked the admiration of both historians and economists'. (Sir William Wedderburn, in an article published in *Contemporary Review*, May, 1917).

'The social basis of India was in the municipalities of the rural population. That was her salvation. Foreign conquerors, one after another, occupied India, but the municipal organizations of the village people were not upset'. (Sir Charles Trevelyan, ex-provincial governor, in his testimony before a Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1873).

Sir James Caird, an authority of irreproachable reputation, describes the village community system as the 'major anchor of the governmental ship of India'. The 'better government' introduced into India by the British has undermined this solid foundation of the political body.

The civil laws, enforced currently in India, are based on the highly developed old Indian codes and on the land regulations established by the eminent economist and jurist Todarmull during the regime of Akbar the Great at the end of the sixteenth century. The law of inheritance, codified by Indian jurists, has not been surpassed up to now by any European state; England has to learn from India how to concede to women the right of having property as independent owners. The census system, developed and put into operation by the great historian Abul Fazl during the reign of Akbar, is considered even now as a marvel. Not only the number of inhabitants but also the cattle, ploughs, trees, tanks and troughs of the fourteen provinces of the great Empire are registered in the memorable book called *Ain-i-Akbari*. The economic condition of India was enviable for many centuries, and the tradition of her wealth attracted the adventurers and pirates of Mediaeval Europe.

England, not India has benefited

The industrial supremacy of present-day England originated in the plunder of India. Brooks Adams says: 'The tremendous economic prosperity of Britain is the result of the unexpected and enormous influx of the wealth extracted from India'. The value of the wealth plundered from India and transported to England in the course of the 57 years between Plassey and Waterloo has been calculated at one thousand million sterling pounds. The reports and private correspondence of the first officials of the East India Company prove the prosperity of the masses of India in those days.

What Profit has the 'Benevolent' British Administration Brought to India?

It is assumed almost universally that the 'half-civilized' people of India are being educated and that they prosper under the benign auspices of the British Empire. Before stating that the British rule in India is an anomaly that cannot be justified by any fair reasoning, let us make it clear that the Indian people have not benefited from the British administration; on the contrary, India has gone backwards. Any government worthy of the name takes care primarily of three basic duties, namely: economic welfare, educational improvement and health conditions of the people under its rule.

The Economic Condition of the Indian People Under the British Rule

The economic condition of millions of human beings in India is unenviable. In this progressive twentieth century, only in India do millions of inhabitants die of hunger. Hunger has become in India a real epidemic over the last 50 years. In the last century there were no less than thirty-two famines, and thirty-seven million human lives were lost; and this happened under the beneficial British administration. In contrast, during the seven centuries previous to the British occupation, India suffered only eighteen famines which, in most cases, were confined to small areas. The population in India is not as dense as in many modern European countries, nor is the birthrate very high, since it is 75 per thousand lower than the European average. A long time ago famines disappeared from Europe, from many parts of America and even from as young a state as Japan. On the other hand, India in spite of her vast natural resources and old economic prosperity suffers from this evil up to the present day. Even under the present conditions India produces more primary products than necessary for the population. Nevertheless, according to a high British official, 'half of the population in the country do not know the pleasure of enjoying an adequate meal in all their life'.

William Digby, who was a high official of the Civil Service in India for twenty-five years, declares that 'the land of India under the British government is becoming a land of beggars', and he demonstrates with the help of the reports of the official archives that the daily income per capita of the country went down from two pence in 1850 to three-quarters of a penny in 1900. The situation of the people is getting worse in this century. The true cause of the famines in India is not lack of food. The cause of this disgraceful situation is the constant drain of her wealth. Even during the years in which famine was particularly intense and people died from lack of food like flies, the export of grain followed the regular rate. Have those thinkers who piously look for a way to abolish wars to prevent the sacrifice of a large number of human beings noticed that the total number of deaths caused by famines in India from 1850 to 1905 was higher than the casualties of all the wars in the world during the same period?

Education

Education is claimed to be one of the gifts conferred by England on the Indian people. The educational advancement of India is summed up in the following words of Dr. William T. Harris, former Director of Public Instruction of the United States: 'The British public education in India is a stain on civilization'. The educational policy followed by the British in the Indian Empire was clearly indicated by a director of the East India Company more than a century ago in the following manner: 'We have just lost the American colonies because of our stupidity in allowing there the establishment of schools and colleges, but we must not repeat the same stupidity in our policy in India'.

Let the official report speak about the development of education in India under the British rule. Whereas thirty per cent of the budget is spent on supporting the army, in which no Indian is allowed to hold a position except in an inferior rank, only twelve per cent is spent on public instruction. Less than fifteen per cent of the population gets rudimentary education. Education is neither free nor compulsory. It is impossible for a people whose daily income per capita is less than one cent to pay for the education of their children in private schools. The British government in India spends on an average three Mexican pesos a year on the education of a student; at the same time official reports claim that 'practically all the Europeans and Eurasians of the right age-group have the facility of receiving education'. On the education of these latter groups, the public budget, supported mainly by the mass of Indians who pay high taxes, spends no less than forty pesos a year per student. Whereas many of the native states like Baroda, Mysore, Travancore, Gwalior, etc., etc., provide their subjects with free and compulsory education, the bill presented to the Legislative Council by the non-official members asking for the establishment of free primary schools in British territories was rejected several times by the Government. The promoters of the project even offered to pay half of the additional expense by way of private donations. In the British Empire of India there are only five schools of medicine which teach a total of 1,822 students; all these institutions owe their origin to the magnanimous donations of Indians. The government supports four colleges of engineering and ten technical schools which take a total of 1,365 students; in a vast, mainly agricultural country like India, the government maintains only three schools of agriculture for 267 students. Thus the British government in India trains 1,822 physicians, and 1,365 engineers to preserve the health and comfort of 315,000,000 human beings, whose welfare and prosperity are claimed to be ostensibly the main motivation and 'raison d'étre' of British rule in India.

Public Health

Even now when medical science has reached a high degree of development, British India continues to suffer regularly from plagues and epidemics such as cholera, bubonic plague, smallpox, malaria, etc., which cause millions of deaths a year. During the seven years between 1897 and 1904, the number of victims of bubonic plague reached the horrible figure of 3,000,000. The average life span of the Indians is 25 years, contrasting with the European or American life span which is 45. Last year the British Government in India refused to grant the petty amount of 60,000 pesos for research into the prevention of malaria in the swamps of Bengal. The excuse was lack of funds in the treasury, but before the end of the year 1,000,000,000 pesos were charged to the budget and extorted from the exhausted and hungry people, for the imperial war fund. The horrifying irony of this is that this imperial plunder was reported to the world as a present of India to the British Empire. It was cited as demonstration of the spontaneous 'loyalty' of the Indian people towards their murderers!

The extensive river system in the plains of the lower Ganges, which since time immemorial has been the natural drain of the northern part of the country, is now obstructed with silt and this is transforming the province of Bengal into an immense swamp, reducing it to a region infested with the most virulent type of malaria fever. The Government pays no attention to the people's petition that these rivers should be dredged and cleared. On the other side, in the Punjab plateau, its robust inhabitants who never suffered in their history from any serious illness are also becoming rapidly victims of malaria fever. The continuous weakening of the vitality of the people who, under the 'benevolent' British administration, are suffering from under-nourishment, is the cause of these calamitous epidemics which have already been eradicated from the rest of the world.

The British Government in India is Not Based on the Consent of the Governed

In your speech on Flag Day, Your Excellency said: 'Facts rule the world today and nowhere are they valued more highly than in the United States where we are used to dealing with facts and not with sophisms'. Given the facts mentioned in the previous paragraphs, is it not inconsistent to denounce the Indian people as seditious and rebellious because they are fighting for their freedom, or to accept the lies and sophisms of England as biblical truth? From your viewpoint, formed by your commitment to the principles of liberty, the British yoke in India is the rule of a strange race upon another which is absolutely different in religion, blood, language, manners and traditions, and therefore such a rule cannot be accepted. You do not pretend not to know that every country has the right to revolution and to overthrow an alien or despotic government, otherwise, the noble doctrine that affirms that 'Governments are based on the consent of the governed and derive their powers from that consent' will be repudiated and lose its meaning.

India Repeats the History of the American Revolution

Richard Price, in his 'Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty, the Principles of Justice and the Policy of War with America', wrote in 1776: 'Look at India. More has been done there than is attempted now in America. The British, with their lust for plunder and spirit of conquest, have depopulated kingdoms, ruined millions of innocent people with their infamous oppression and rapacity. Human justice has been asleep in this case, but will divine justice also sleep?'

This is the clear view of history condemning England for a crime more atrocious, more diabolic, more inhuman than that against which Washington urged your illustrious ancestors to rebel. The high position of Your Excellency is the inheritance of that revolution. The founders of this republic were accused by England as rebellious and seditious. Although at this moment Your Excellency is an ally of the enemy of your ancestors, you should not imitate England and repudiate the same truth that you have preached so eloquently and to which you owe your having reached the high command of the great American nation. Would it not be better for you to repeat the prophetic words of Richard Price: 'Will divine justice also sleep?'

Freedom is the innate right of all human beings. We want to believe that Your Excellency is leading the American people to the war because of your devotion to the cause of freedom. Your Excellency says that you have joined the war inspired by the noble ideal of liberating the Belgians, Serbs, Poles, Slavs, Bohemians, Magyars and even the German people themselves whom you believe to be enslaved and who, according to your criterion of freedom, require to be emancipated. Your ideal of securing freedom to small nations is really beautiful when it is concerned with the people under the enemy's control, but are we not entitled to be suspicious of the sincerity of such a theory when we see that the just claims of millions of Indians who are dying of hunger are denied? You who see the need for pushing, by means of pressure, moral and material, neutral countries to support the Allies in the war, can you not find an honourable way to recognize the unnoticed right that India so justly claims to secure the same peace and freedom, the re-vindication of which has led you to the war?

When you denounce the plots and intrigues of your enemies, would it not be a good idea to examine also the pretensions of your allies? And if those pretensions, tested by standards of unbiased justice, are proved to be the covers of very similar plots, barbarisms and imperialist greed that do not hesitate to rob freedom and the right of a people to develop their own resources, would it not be appropriate that, after this dispassionate examination, a crusade is launched against all tyrannies that exist everywhere in the world? Only by following the dictates of an impartial and honest sense of justice will Your Excellency fulfil your magnificent promise of 'making a world fit for democracy'.

Germany could be for India what France was for the American colonials

So much has been said about the German plots in India that it is worth making clear the relationship which today exists between Germany and the struggle for Indian independence. Allow us to emphasize as strongly as possible that the attribution of the Nationalist Movement to German instigation is completely false. However, it is a historical fact that no dependent and oppressed people could have succeeded in their attempt to gain freedom without the effective help of some other powerful and great nation. American colonials received the help of France; Italy also received the help of France and England to overthrow the Austrian rule; the success of the Russian revolution is largely due to the help of the Allies who saw in the Tsarist regime a grave hazard. Your Excellency is drawing upon all the resources of the United States in order to help Poles, Magyars, Slavs from the south, Czechs, Armenians and others to recover their freedom. We, too, in our search for the help of a great and powerful nation in our struggle for independence, are simply resorting to valid means which, according to history, have already been adopted by oppressed countries in order to be liberated. The leaders of those nations which have already become independent and developed are venerated by the whole world as heroes and apostles of human rights.

Your Excellency will never consider Benjamin Franklin to be a spy because he went to Montreal to gain the co-operation of Canada for the cause of the rebel colonials. Your Excellency denounces us as seditious and rebellious, and the government of the United States persecutes our countrymen who have looked for refuge in this country as if they were 'conspirators and violators of neutrality'. Do you forget the mission of Benjamin Franklin, Silas Dean and Arthur Lee in France when that country was apparently at peace with England? Franklin, from his residence in the house of Le Roy de Chaumont, 'active friend of the American cause' as he is called in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 'could be in communication with the French Court without compromising the latter in the eyes of Great Britain'. The historical expedition of Lafayette, so very decisive for the fate of the American Revolution, was organized in Cadiz and it sailed for

America from that neutral port in Spain. Would you dare to defend Benjamin Franklin when he accepted the sum of 60 million dollars as a 'loan or gift' from France and condemn at the same time the probable contract or application for a loan made by the National Party of India to the German Government, when the programme and legitimate aspirations for the political independence of India have been recognized by the mentioned government as well as by the Government of Turkey? If it is legitimate for England and consequently for Your Excellency to recognize as constitutional governments the rebellious Confederation of Venezuela and the rebels of the Arab deserts who were instigated to rebellion by Great Britain, on the ground of what principle of international law or abstract justice can Your Excellency stigmatize as 'plots and plans of conquest' the German recognition of the Cause of Indian Independence?

The rebellious colonials of North America addressed themselves to France in their search for help because, in spite of the apparent peace, France was the potential enemy of England. In the present conflict, the Indian people saw in Germany an ally whose interests were identical and in harmony with their own. In the same way as your ancestors sent the Franklin mission to France in order to make an alliance, we tried to arrive at an agreement with the power that could serve our interests and immediate needs. To blame us for exercising our legitimate right when we proceeded in this way would mean to condemn the conduct of your great patriots, Washington, Jefferson and Adams. If you do so, the logical conclusion of your condemnation will be to lower the flag of the Stars and Stripes at the White House and raise instead the Union Jack of Great Britain and enjoy within the Anglo-Saxon Empire the degree of democracy and autonomy that England was kind enough to grant to her colonies.

The Very Words of Your Excellency Support Our Cause

Several times Your Excellency has declared that the United States has joined the European war not simply to help the Allies or for its own aggrandizement, but in order to secure the right to freedom for humanity, 'to make the world fit for democracy'. We have heard you saying in your memorable manifesto to Russia: 'No country can be forced to live under a regime opposed to its will'. Your doctrine was also expressed in your speech of the American Independence Day and you said then that 'the peace of the world cannot be secured until the individual nations have freedom'. We assume that this theory was conceived for universal application. Otherwise we will be forced to believe that political interests show no regard for your philosophy of freedom.

When, in your Flag Day speech, Your Excellency condemned German imperialism for not recognizing the principle of ethnic solidarity and you told your audience that 'Germany had tried to put different racial and political entities under her rule which were kept united only through application of brutal force', the Eastern peoples were included in the list of those ethnic/political unities which according to your declaration you were trying to save. We, the Indian people, are trying to liberate ourselves from a tyranny which has been squashing us for more than a century and a half and which seeks to deprive us even of the right to live. If we are to believe your words, you are leading a crusade which has as its goal the liberation of all the peoples of the world, such as 'the proud people of Bohemia', 'the small and virile people of the Balkans' or 'the astute people of the Orient'. That is the promise you have to keep if your words are sincere and of real worth.

The Arch-Violators of Solemn Treaties

Under your leadership, the United States shares the aims of the Entente because your mission is exactly the same as that of the Entente, namely, 'to establish peace in the world and secure for mankind the benefits of fair play, justice and the freedom to live without organized assault'. Your Excellency is an ally of the Entente in order to defend the sacred principle of nationality against the great organization called the German Empire which, in your view, threatens the security of the world. Germany has 'violated solemn international promises'. Against that are England, heroic and noble champion of the outraged Belgium; France, valiant heroine ready to spill the last drop of her blood in defence of abstract justice; Russia, the dignified protector-knight of Serbia; and finally the United States which volunteers to sacrifice itself on the altar of freedom. They are united against Germany. Your Excellency is mainly responsible for the sacrifice of your people for the sake of an exalted ideal. You are a renowned historian, and unless you are altogether busy writing laboriously the future history where you yourself are going to be deemed the noble hero, we ask you to look at the recent past and see your allies playing roles totally contrary to your declared principles. You will then find France, the Galahad of the nations, conspiring against the independence of Morocco, whose sovereignty was violated although it was guaranteed by the most solemn promises of Europe and the United States; France, thanks to a superior brutal force, snatching from the weakened China the vast territory of Indo-China, whose population remains subjugated against their will under the French Government. Has Your Excellency ever considered the cowardly and brutal way in which France treated the young prince and his compatriots who tried to recover the freedom of Indo-China? Have you found any article of international law that justifies the recent French violation of the territorial sovereignty of China in Tien-Tsin?

England, valiant defender of faith and of national prestige, has not always been the champion or protector of 'humanity, justice, honesty and fair play'. Your knowledge of history should remind you of how many promises England has made to India which have not been kept and which, you know, will never be kept. What happened to the gentlemanly British pledge to respect and maintain the integrity of the small nations when Dalhousie's policy of annexation reduced thousands of solemn treaties into 'pieces of paper' in India? In the course of a single decade the British Government repudiated all the obligations contracted under a number of treaties with the states of Nagpur, Jhansi, Oudh, Sindh, Satara and the Punjab. It also violated the agreement made with the son of the ex-Peshwa, who was the ruler of Central India but who, with many other princes, was already overthrown. Each of those states was independent and had no restrictions on their sovereignty, and the British Government signed treaties and agreements with them based on political equality between one nation and another. Where was the British respect for solemn promises when Lord Salisbury, the then Secretary of State for India, declared without blushing that the proclamation of Queen Victoria to the Indian people was never meant to be taken seriously? Was not that an instance of political hypocrisy?

The Freedom of India will be a Great Step towards World Peace

We have pointed out a few historical facts which we assume are well known to Your Excellency, with a view to drawing your attention to a country where there is 'organized assault' on its people. This should be removed if your intention and promises to establish peace in the world are sincere. It is not in Europe but in the debilitated countries of Asia and Africa that the germs of war in modern times are hatched by the imperialist greed of the European nations, whose ambition throws the world into horrible convulsions causing suffering to people who are in no way to blame for the catastrophes. The panacea that can cure the evils of the world is the complete liberation of all dominated peoples and countries, not only in Europe but also in Asia and Africa. Therefore, our intention of liberating India, if successful, will not only give freedom to a fifth of the world's population which is without question their birthright, but also will prepare the way for humanity towards its goal of peace and fraternity. Since according to your declaration you are fighting for the freedom of the world, you are not only a champion of our cause but you will also find in us an ally who is working towards the realization of your dreams and those of the nation you are leading at this critical moment in history.

We pray that Your Excellency will find the sincerity, courage and spirit necessary to make the great and noble ideals expressed in your words become fact.

Most Respected Sir,
We remain your attentive servants,
The Nationalist Party of India
Per its Representative
(Signed) M. N. ROY.

La India, Su Pasado, Su Presente y Su Porvenir

Por M. N. Roy
Mexico 1918

India: Her Past, Present and Future

by M. N. Roy
Mexico 1918

Obras del Mismo Autor:

El Camino para la Paz duradera del Mundo	$0.25
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Works by the same author:

The Way to Durable Peace in the World
The Voice of India
Open Letter to President Wilson
India: Her Past, Present and Future

Editor's Note

The original Spanish text had five appendices (pp. 191–8) providing details and statistical tables under the following headings:

A. Functions of the Imperial Government of India
B. Comparative Wealth of the Nations (1918)
C. The number of deaths in India 1875–1915
D. Expenditure per head on primary education in different countries (1911)
E. Famines in Great Britain and India in corresponding periods.

We have left out these appendices in the present selection. We have also excluded the many quotations from various sources which preceded each chapter. The quotations which Roy had translated from English into Spanish in support of his arguments were distributed as follows:

Before Introduction	From J. T. Sunderland.
Before Chapter One	From Hiuen-Tsang, Seely, Edmund Burke.
Before Chapter Two	From Froude, Chamberlain, Burke, Theodore Morrison, John Stuart Mill, John Shore, William Jennings Bryan.
Before Chapter Three	From Megasthenes, Col. Briggs, Lecky, Ramsay Macdonald, William Hunter, H. M. Hyndman.
Before Chapter Four	From Montgomery Martin, G. W. Forrest, Charles Roberts, William Digby.
Before Chapter Five	From *The Manchester Guardian*, *The Nation*, London.
Before Chapter Six	From William T. Harris, David Hamilton, William Jennings Bryan, Paul Reinsch.
Before Chapter Seven	From Lord Kitchener, Theodore Morrison, Lord Roberts, Lord Lansdowne, J. G. Goddard.
Before Chapter Eight	From Valentine Chirol, Andrew Carnegie, Paul Kennedy, Paul Reinsch.
Before Chapter Nine	From Margaret Noble, Arabinda Ghose, M. K. Gandhi, Lord Crewe.

Other than the above any other omissions have been indicated by a series of dots (. . .). However, the main body of the Spanish text has been retained in translation. S.N.R.

Preface

This short work, which was published just before Christmas, is a gift to the Mexican people in gratitude for their understanding of the Indian claim for independence. Many excellent books have been written in Spanish on the religion, philosophy, ancient literature, etc. etc., of India, but there is a lack of any study of the past and present political and economic situation of the country. During my stay in Mexico, I discovered that although there is a feeling of deep affection and goodwill towards my native land, nothing much is known about the glorious history and highly developed religion and philosophy of 'mysterious' India and her 'picturesque' people. In the following pages, I do not attempt—nor am I able—to describe the political and economic history of India. I have merely tried, within my limited ability, to give some historic data and facts which are little known in this part of the world in order to correct mistaken ideas about the past and present condition of my country. Our history has been misinterpreted and badly written by imperialist authors causing the world to believe that before the so-called British conquest India did not exist as a nation and that the conquest meant progress for India. The reason for this book is to prove that this theory lacks any truth whatsoever. The most remarkable fact is that the quotes from English writers and official figures included in my treatise are sufficient evidence themselves to illustrate the evils of the imperialist doctrine imposed on the world, validating itself through lack of evidence to the contrary.

I take this opportunity to thank most sincerely my learned friends Señor don José G. Montes de Oca and Señor Licendiado don Enrique Guardiola for their valuable help in the preparation of this book. I give many thanks also to the Mexican people for the warm appreciation accorded the two shorter books which I presented to them before.

Mexico, DF., 24 December 1918. Manabendranath Roy

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Introduction

From elementary history books we learn that 'India is the epitome of the world.' This brief definition is at once the most complete. India is certainly the synthesis of the world. Indeed, all the world's geographical features are found in and around India: the immense coastline which extends for more than 4,000 miles; the majestic and awe-inspiring Himalayas with their perpetually snow-covered peaks; the wide, extremely fertile plains crossed by numerous navigable rivers; vast deserts where one can hear the voice of the dead; huge forests which have been a source of valuable wood for centuries. The climate is equally varied. The snow-covered Himalayas, the fertile high plains of the Punjab, the deserts of Rajputana and the torrid Deccan plateau are all found in India. The population itself is a great mixture of various races which, since time immemorial, have been attracted to the peninsula. Generous India welcomed all these invaders who, instead of conquering, were themselves absorbed and conquered by her.

India's population today is 315,000,000. This enormous community is made up of people of all colours, faiths and different levels of civilization, from the mountain tribes to the various highly cultured urban social groups; from the worship of nature to the highest level of philosophy. This is the home of Hinduism which, together with its two largest branches, Buddhism and Jainism, is the country's principal religion. There are also sixty-six million Mohammedans, almost three million Christians and various other smaller sects which are indirectly connected to one or other of the large communities. All live and flourish in harmony without suffering any opposition or persecution.

In order to study and clearly understand the life and the national, social, religious and philosophical existence of India, it is necessary to be aware of the origin and evolution of her people. The Indo-Aryan race to which the Indians belong may be traced back to a prehistoric pastoral tribe about whom little is yet known. Although the Hindu people refer to themselves as Indo-Aryans and the ancient name of the country was 'Aryabarta'—the land of the Aryans—we are not over-concerned to prove that we are the direct descendants of those inhabitants of central Asia whence a branch of Aryans came to India. At that time, India already had an indigenous population whose civilization and culture were far more developed than those of the new arrivals. These original inhabitants were Dravidians and the invaders inter-married with them, producing the Indo-Aryans. The indigenous element was dominant in this mixture and we Indians are proud of our Dravidian blood. The Aryans of Central Asia were wild, nomadic tribes. Their contribution to history was to conquer, ravage and annihilate the inhabitants of the surrounding countries.

The nations of modern Europe, which are so proud of their self-acclaimed superiority as the white race, have inherited this aggressive streak from the Aryans. The instinct to enlarge their domain at the expense of weaker countries is a legacy from their ancestors, those invaders who established themselves in Europe after having exterminated the indigenous peoples. However, this did not happen in India, where the aggressive Aryan characteristic was lost through intermarriage with a peaceful people who had never sought to expand their territory. One of the greatest paradoxes in human history is that all the invaders who came to India with the idea of conquering were themselves conquered and peacefully absorbed into the country. One of the many examples can be seen in the results of Alexander the Great's invasion of India in the third century B.C. Indian thought had so greatly influenced Greek philosophy and culture that when Alexander's heir, Seleucos Nicator tried to extend the Greek kingdom into India, he found that Greeks who had already established themselves in the conquered territories had become Indians. Because of this, the vast area conquered and populated by Greeks in the North-West of India not only ceased to be a Greek province but voluntarily became part of Chandragupta's Indian Empire. This had been the first meeting of East and West. The Westerners had intended to conquer and ravage but the East welcomed the foreigners with open arms and reacted to violence with tolerance and goodwill.

Twelve hundred years later saw the barbarian conquest of the Mohammedans. Mohammed was the prophet of fanaticism; his proselytes left the Arabian desert to offer the world either the Koran or the sword. Their invasion of Europe was repulsed by the fanatic and intolerant Christians who successfully defended their religion against the Mohammedan onslaught. In India, however, the Muslim invaders conquered peacefully. The Hindus, originally violently opposed to the Mohammedan invasion, finally gave in to sheer brute force. Revenge was swift. Having once established their empire in India, the Mohammedans adopted the Indian way of life—just as the Greek invaders had done. The Muslims thus succumbed to India's peace and tolerance. Today there are over 66,000,000 Mohammedans in India, but they are as Indian as the Hindus themselves.

With the European invasion in the seventeenth century, India was faced by a problem without precedent. Modern Europe had perfected a system of indirect invasion and conquest. Countries are forced to become vassals of the invaders in all aspects—social, economic and political—and are governed by an outside authority which never becomes influenced by them. Like all far-reaching events, the conquests of ancient times, although very brutal, did produce some good results. Contact with different peoples provided an opportunity for mutual understanding through the concept of universal brotherhood. Unfortunately, modern Europe has been an obstacle to this human process. The present rulers of India have no desire to identify with the people they dominate, but wish only to benefit themselves from the conquest. It remains to be seen what effect this will have on the relationship between members of the human family.

The most amazing aspect in the history of India is that all those waves of foreign invasions and the troubles resulting from them have never before been able to affect the intimate life of the nation. Strong nations with varying levels of culture have plunged into India, creating some superficial disturbance and then becoming overpowered by her deep tranquility and wisdom, leaving sometimes a slight trace on national life. This strong indestructible Indian quality, which persists in spite of the invasions, is praised by the English poet Matthew Arnold in verse referring to the Greek invasion of India:

The East bow'd low before the blast
in patient, deep disdain;
She let the legions thunder past,
And plunged in thought again.*

The concept of unity revealed by the ancient Indian prophets has always been the inspiration of national life. 'God is one and indivisible although worshipped by different peoples and sects and known by many names'. This text from the oldest scripture, the Rig-Veda, was composed as early as 2,000B.C. and reveals the essence of tolerance and liberty in the Indo-Aryans. Their religion, with its various creeds and sects, is based on this fundamental doctrine and its philosophy, which is divided into six principal schools each of which is composed of numerous branches. In spite of all this apparent diversity of belief and doctrine, there has never been any bloodshed caused by religious conflict or persecution. The secret of India's unity lies in freedom of thought and identity of conviction, that is the conviction the Hindus derive from the intimate perception of truth, each in his own way.

India began life in the dim past, questioning the reason for her existence. Since that time, the moral and intellectual life of India has been based on the ability and courage to respond to these questions.

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*From 'Obermann Once More', vs. 39. S. N. R.

Each of the various sects and philosophical schools interpret the question of existence in its own way. The mutually agreeable solution arrived at constitutes the spirit and culture of India: 'That which exists is One—men call Him by many names'. I am the subject—the creation, with its apparent diversity is the object which enables me to find unity in diversity. And in the end to be the centre of creation, which is nothing but a creation of mine; and being my creation, it cannot exist without me. I love it and loving it I forget all the superficial differences and, as a result, the ideal, the unity of all that exists, is the only reality for me.

This concept of the unity of the universe, the realization of the identity of the individual with cosmic existence, is India's contribution to the progress of humanity. The world may be compared with a family unit, each member contributing to his utmost ability in order to ensure its existence and future and to benefit the whole. Each individual, each nation, has its own character. The purpose of a national life is to explain and express this identity, as much for its own satisfaction as to help human society move towards its goal. All its efforts, all its activities, all its undertakings always revolve around this axis. When a nation loses sight of its goal and busies itself instead with egoistic interests, deluding itself that it is the only nation worthy of dominating the rest of the world, it destroys the equilibrium of the community. Instead of being a useful member, it becomes a hindrance to general progress. Nature then, through an immutable law, takes revenge and frees itself of this unhealthy element. Here lies the reason for the rise and fall of powerful empires, of the birth, domination and disappearance of peoples who conquered and sought to dominate much of the world. So many nations, so many empires which have risen to national glory through military force, through noble ideals, or through their own efforts, have vanished, leaving only the merest of shadows behind.

Today we can see and study the events of the past and benefit from the mistakes of our forebears. However, there are some nations who have never strayed from the principles of their mission. Time after time these nations have been severely wounded, have suffered barbaric invasions, cruel oppression, shameful humiliation; but their clarity of vision and sincerity of purpose enabled them to keep the morale necessary to preserve their original ideals and thus to give an example of heroism and grandeur. Strong faith in their universal mission enabled them to wait patiently until the senseless race to obtain worthless things would be over and the world would come to its senses. They never grew impatient, never sought to impose their beliefs by means of force. The sons of those who oppressed them through intolerance and egoism were received warmly and were cared for and defended to the point to sacrifice. These nations have faithfully continued to offer their spiritual and physical self for the benefit of the world.

India, patient and oppressed for many centuries, is one of those nations which remains true to its ideals. Long before any other country had organized itself into a single community with a common ideal, India was united. At least four thousand years ago, the Vedas, hymns of worship and praise to the essential 'Spirit', were written. That was in the earliest days of the Indo-Aryan civilization when the Aryans, nomads, whose lives were filled with hardship, had recently settled in the fertile plains of northern India. They established themselves on the banks of large rivers and lived off natural foods, such as the tasty fruits of numerous trees and crops which they raised with little work. All spare time they had was spent meditating on the greatness of creation and the beauty of nature.

The Aryans gradually mixed with the indigenous peoples who had led an organized communal life for so long. They were influenced by strange forces which wove in their soul a net of profound thoughts. The physical virility of the Aryans and the mental energy of the Dravidians continued to form the Indo-Aryans, when the universal philosophy of Vedanta replaced the earlier Indo-Aryan way of thought. The Upanishads, the philosophical section of the Vedas, were compiled at this time. They contain the fundamental principles of the philosophical, religious, national and social concept of India. The different creeds and sects of Hinduism arose from the Upanishads, as did the various philosophical schools.

In order to understand the reason for existence and thus to find their ultimate destiny all Hindus follow one of three paths: *Yoga*, the unification of microcosmic and macrocosmic existence—it is the unity of the individual and the universal; *Jnana*, the recognition of the Essential through analytical examination; and *Prema Bhakti*, adoration, devotion and Divine Love. In these Hindu doctrines there is no place for faith alone, neither for superstition or anxiety. Hindu thought does not support these mournful inclinations of other faiths. Everyone must feel truth within himself, following the example of the wise who had solved the problem of creation.

The philosophy of the Upanishads later split up into six principal schools: Sankhya, Patanjali, Nyaya, Mimangsa, Vaisheshika, and Vedanta.

Sankhya, which is similar to the philosophies of Comte and Herbert Spencer, is the basis of the others. After having closely studied the material world, Kapila, the founder of the Sankhya doctrine, established the belief that the existence of a Supreme Being cannot be proved, due to lack of sufficient evidence.

Patanjali, which is allied with yoga, advances a little further. It maintains that the Absolute is outside the grasp of our physical-material senses. Moreover, proof needs more than one entity. In order to discover the Absolute, the one principle of the universe, one must totally absorb oneself in the process of uniting the energy of our macrocosmic being to the microcosmic—from diversity to essence in itself—and gradually give up egoism for true and universal existence.

The other three philosophies are more or less secular. One is concerned with logic and the others with secular and spiritual acts. It is in the Vedanta that Indo-Aryan philosophy reaches its highest development. Its teaching is that *all which exists is one and indivisible.* Apparent diversities are no more than different appearances of the same thing. The whole world—the creation—is the product of one Will, a hallucination of ignorance from which all appearances originate. Only ignorance obscures our understanding of the one reality, of the vision of the unity of existence. When this ignorance disappears through reasoning, realization of the unity of the universe may be achieved and the understanding is established that unity manifests itself in apparent diversity which, in its essence, is Divine Love.

The philosophy of the Vedanta, formulated approximately ten centuries before Christ by Vyasa, the greatest of the great Hindu men of thought, the compiler of the Vedas and author of the Mahabharata and Bhagavad Gita, embodies precisely that quality which India has to contribute to the progress of humanity. In fact, to discover unity in apparent diversity has been the object of all our endeavour since the beginning of history. The Indo-Aryans, in developing the philosophy of the Vedanta, have made a great contribution not only for India, but for the whole world. The Vedanta is not the spiritual property of India alone, but rather the inheritance of all human beings. It has been India's privilege to present this universal light for those who seek it.

India has never possessed the insane idea of wanting to be master of the world. One of the principal doctrines of Indian philosophy requires the renunciation of egoism before it is possible to seek divine knowledge. Indian religion is not the creation of an individual or group of individuals. It is the result of the evolution of its national life. Brahma Jnana—divine and absolute knowledge—exists in everything. It was explained by the wise, following the light of their own intelligence and proving that it was there for all to find. They said that the realization of this divine and absolute knowledge is the goal of human life. True satisfaction, pleasure and peace, which are the object of all human individual or collective effort, can be gained only by achieving this.

CHAPTER ONE

Ancient India

The most widely-held belief in the Western World is that the British conquest of India was a great step forward in human progress which has saved the Indian people from bad government and endemic anarchy. It is generally agreed that the object of British administration is not the widening of its dominions, but rather the well-being of the Indian people who have advanced greatly under British rule. History books by imperialist writers such as Macaulay are responsible for this misconception.

Although it is not the purpose of this book to give the history of ancient India, we will give a brief resumé of the condition of the Indian people from ancient times until British domination.

It can be said without any exaggeration that the history of India is as old as the world itself. We know little of the earliest times which have faded into antiquity. It is, however, a well-known fact that many centuries before Christ and long before the birth of modern Europe, Indian civilization was highly developed in all fields. The superior philosophical, religious and ethical character of this ancient civilization is generally accepted by the world. The secular aspect, however, the material development of Hindu culture, is still completely unknown to the West, except to students of the subject. Together with their religion, philosophy and literature, the Hindus formulated a well-defined social system at least 1,500 years before Christ. This system contained many of the principles of modern socialism, such as the concept of state and government elected by the people. By about 2,000 B.C. the whole country was united in the kingdom of the Hindu emperor Yudhishthira.

From the period of the Rig Veda—one of the earliest writings ever—Hindu legislators have clearly defined the relationship between king and state. The Indo-Aryan constitution was, of course, monarchical, but the emperor or king had to obey the established laws. In the Mahabharata—one of the greatest Hindu epics—the king's function is described thus: 'The duty of a king is to maintain and defend justice and not merely to follow his own whims. The king is the protector of the world; if he conducts himself wisely, he will be honoured as a god on earth; if not, it will be his undoing. All creation is supported by justice which, in its turn, depends on the king'.

Manu, the great Hindu legislator, the Moses of India, speaks of royal duty with these words: 'The king must protect his subjects zealously and carefully. The king who concerns himself with the protection and prosperity of the state is indeed worthy of all honour. The king who does not fulfil his duties loses the right to take part of the people's earning'. In conclusion he says that in principle the Indo-Aryan crown was not hereditary and the king was elected by the community. Kings who became tyrants were often dethroned. Manu says that 'if a king governs despotically, he loses not only the right to reign, but also his very life. The king who oppresses his kingdom through ignorance, loses his throne and his life as do his relatives'. The modern democratic concept of making and breaking executive power in order to direct public affairs was quite well known in India long before the Christian era. Moreover, the Hindu concept of the state gives the people the right to revolt and to use violent means when and where necessary.

Another example of the progress of ancient India is the growth of trade and industry. According to Dr Sayce, a noted authority on Assyrian history, India traded with Babylonia by land and sea at least three thousand years before Christ. In those days, India exported large quantities of fine materials. The ivory, garments, precious stones, etc., used in the magnificent court of King Solomon, came from India.

The English historian Thornton, in his book *The History of British India*, describes the progress and prosperity of ancient India: 'Long before the pyramids cast their shadows over the valley of the Nile, at a time when Greece and Italy—cradles of European civilization—were still inhabited by nomadic peoples, India was the home of wealth and splendour. The economy was booming. Skilful artisans worked the products of the earth into beautiful and delicate objects. Architects and sculptors constructed buildings and monuments which are still in good condition, after thousands of years. India must have been a country of extraordinary magnificence'.

From earliest times until the seventeenth century A.D., India was the commercial centre of the world. Thanks to the fertility of the soil and the dexterity of her artisans and workers, India always produced more than she purchased. In this way the balance of trade remained in her favour. From Roman times until the British, in the early eighteenth century, the whole world complained that too much gold was constantly being sent to India. India's dominant position was due to wise government policy. The principal exports were industrial and luxury products. The export of large quantities of foodstuffs was permitted only if sufficient stores were left for the population.

When Alexander of Macedonia invaded India in B.C. 326, the country was at the peak of its glory and prosperity. The conqueror soon realized how impossible it was to penetrate deep into the interior of the country and returned to his homeland. Seleucos Nicator, who inherited Alexander's Asian kingdom, attempted to conquer India, but was defeated by the forces of the Emperor Chandragupta.

As a result of this attempted conquest, relations between Greece and India grew closer. The two empires concluded a treaty; a Hellenic princess, the daughter of Seleucos, married the Hindu emperor and the two courts exchanged ambassadors. Megasthenes, the first Greek ambassador to the court of Chandragupta, has left us a clear account of the conditions he encountered in India. It is appropriate to insert here a few lines from that famous historical document: 'They live together frugally and simply. They never drink alcohol . . . . They attach equal importance to truth and virtue. Their courts of justice are very well organized, but they do not often need the protection of the law'.

'Those in charge of the city are divided into six groups of five members each. The first group is responsible for arts and industry; the second for looking after foreigners; the third registers births, marriages and deaths; the fourth checks and inspects traffic and trade; the fifth controls manufactured goods and ensures that their sale is in the public interest; the sixth collects taxes, one-tenth of the value of the goods sold. Most of the agricultural land is suitable for irrigation, which results in two harvests per year. The country has never suffered famine, nor indeed any shortage of food'.

The government of Chandragupta and his successors embraced almost all the branches of public administration known to today's nations. 'There was a separate department of labour to look after the well-being of the artisans and workers and to protect the deserted, sick and jobless. There was a permanent commission to record births, marriages and deaths; a ministry of public welfare, others of trade, industry and public education. A ministerial committee was in charge of the large army and powerful navy. Other duties and functions of the government were to control the mines, to smelt the minerals in order to extract the metals; the manufacture of arms and the minting of money under the direction of expert engineers and scientists; the opening of canals and reservoirs and the introduction and provision of new methods of irrigation; the establishment of factories and the growth of industries; the maintenance of public grazing lands for livestock; the establishment and administration of hospitals; the construction and repair of government roads, wharfs, dykes, bridges, etc., etc.'

Asoka, Chandragupta's grandson, who reigned in the third century B. C., made his country even more grand and noble. He was the first

Buddhist emperor. The country continued to flourish philosophically, socially, morally and materially without any outside intervention until the first Mohammedan invasion in about A.D. 800. For four centuries, the Mohammedans fought to gain some foothold in India and were finally able to take possession of a small part. Until A.D. 1206, when the first Mohammedan king of India, Kutub-ud-din, founded his dynasty in Delhi, India was united and independent in all aspects. The country developed not only a spiritual and moral civilization, but also perfected a social and political concept which contributed greatly to its material advancement and which has not yet been surpassed by any modern nation.

The Mohammedan empire in India lasted nominally six centuries. I say 'nominally' because during the first three hundred years, Mohammedan rule was limited to a few areas in the north; the greater part of the country remained independent. From the middle of the seventeenth century, the Mohammedan kings practically ceased ruling further afield than the walls of Delhi. The Sikhs (a new Hindu community) and the Marhattas (also Hindus) controlled extensive territory in the north and south respectively. Furthermore, the Mohammedan administration was never 'foreign', their conquest being similar to the Norman and Danish conquests of Britain. Soon after taking the imperial throne, the Mohammedan invaders ceased being foreigners; they gradually occupied the whole country which they gladly adopted as their own. The administration continued to be organized by Hindus in collaboration with the Mohammedans. The various provinces enjoyed complete autonomy under Hindu governors. Hindus were often in supreme command of the army, over Mohammedan nobles and they were all equal subjects of the same hereditary leader.

Above all, commerce and industry remained mainly in Hindu hands. Hindu officials collected taxes for the Mohammedan government and distributed the money where needed for the benefit of the people. With the exception of three or four individual invaders who pillaged India, the Mohammedan monarchs never sent a penny of public revenue out of the country. Wealth produced by the country was invested in the land thus benefiting the people themselves and not a group of foreign exploiters. The Mohammedan government was politically and economically as indigenous as if it had been Hindu.

The Mohammedan rulers never passed laws aimed at weakening the people, nor did they have a distant homeland, the well-being of which was uppermost in their minds whilst governing India. They did not have to protect and develop the commerce and industry of their country at the cost of the economic prosperity of the country they dominated. They were not obliged to exploit and starve the Indian villagers and artisans to death, in order to provide means for the material advancement of a distant land. The Mohammedans adopted India as their own, forming an integral part of the society. Their government was in all aspects indigenous, maintained and directed equally by Hindus and Mohammedans.

Famous travellers such as Marco Polo, Nicolo de Conti, Abul-Feda of Damascus, etc., who visited India during the Mohammedan period have left vivid accounts of the economic prosperity of the country. They said that all along the coast there were numerous flourishing ports engaged in maritime trade with Japan and Europe. The goods were transported in ships built in Indian docks by Indian craftsmen.

Elphinstone, the British historian, wrote about the economic prosperity during the Mohammedan period:

> The people do not normally show any signs of oppression or suffering. Mohammedan historians describe the people as living in well designed houses, the women adorned with gold and silver. There is no doubt that the general state of the people must have been prosperous in those times.

Nicolo de Conti, who travelled in India in 1420, frequently mentioned the economic prosperity of the provinces along the Arabian Sea. He discovered a line of cities along the banks of the Ganges and described them as flourishing and filled with gold and silver and precious stones. His account corroborates that of Barbosa and Berthema, who visited India at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

The Italian traveller, Pietro del Valle, wrote in 1623: 'Everyone lives in a lordly manner and does so in complete security. The king never persecutes his subjects with false accusations, nor does he confiscate any of their wealth'.

Tavernier said of the Emperor Shah Jehan: 'He who had the celebrated Peacock Throne constructed and he who threw his own coins and precious objects to the spectators at festivals, did not rule as a king over his subjects, but rather as the father of a family'.

The above quotations offer sufficient proof of the economic prosperity and social tranquility of India in the Mohammedan period. They suffice to show that until British times India was in no way inferior to contemporary Europe. Permit us now to state clearly that as a result of British administration, the condition of the Indian people has rapidly deteriorated.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, the religious fanaticism and political despotism of the Emperor Aurangzeb forced the Indian people to rebel against the imperial government. Because of this popular insurrection, the majestic Mohammedan empire suddenly crumbled and the Hindu empire of the Mahrattas came to power. This empire was established in the southern half of the country. An independent northern kingdom was founded by the Sikhs in the Punjab. Distant provinces such as Bengal also declared their independence from the central government in Delhi. This temporary political division was the inevitable result of a great revolution in a huge country with a vast population. There were, of course, some disturbances and civil wars during this period of transition and reconstruction. The French and English merchants, taking advantage of the unrest and disorganization, began to establish their own empire in India. All nations have gone through similar stages of turmoil in their development.

It is appropriate to analyse here the fallacy propagated by the British imperialists that Britain took possession of India not for egotistic reasons, but in order to save the country from bad government and anarchy and to offer it a superior civilization and magnificent administration. To best illustrate this, we will begin by citing the opinion of one of the English historians who has studied the facts fairly and sympathetically:

> There has never been a greater error as that which presents the ancient political system of India as being decrepit, despotic, degenerate and lacking popular support. This error is very convenient for our own self-love and serves well to quieten our conscience, interpreting as just our aggression against a people oppressed by us and pretending that this people would have been superstitious slaves were it not for the 'disinterested' violence of a foreign civilization which has saved them with the sword. This theory has been refuted in declarations by gentlemen of unquestionable knowledge and undeniable authority. (W. M. Torrens, *Empire in Asia*)

In order to justify British aggression in India, Western imperialist writers always speak a great deal of the state of turmoil which existed in India as a transitory result of a great revolution. They piously compare early eighteenth-century India with the Europe of 150 years later. An astute observer, Sir Thomas Monroe, said: 'When we compare other countries with England, we usually speak of England today; we hardly ever think back further than the Reformation'. Instead of comparing India of the seventeenth or eighteenth century with England of the nineteenth century, one should compare the state of the two countries at the beginning of the Christian era, when one of them was at the peak of civilization whilst the other scarcely existed. When one speaks of the cruelty of the Mohammedan conquerors, one must not forget the events of contemporary Christian history. For example, think of the atrocities which occurred during the taking of Jerusalem by the first Crusaders at the end of the eleventh century! A whole garrison of 40,000 men was annihilated; there was no regard for age or sex. 'The same sword murdered the child and its mother'. When he proclaimed himself master of the city of Vitry in the twelfth century, Louis VII of France ordered it to be burnt. At the same time in England during the reign of King Stephen 'they made war with such fury that the earth lay uncultivated and they forgot the use of farming implements. The result of the French and English wars in the fourteenth century was more destructive and horrible than the sum total of all the violence of any time or country'. The Mohammedan conquest and administration of India are of no comparable significance nor do they bear any resemblance to the cruelty which even the most antagonistic historians have not been able to find. When we hear speak of India's bad government which was purged by British justice, we could very well draw the world's attention to the reigns of Charles V, Philip II, Louis XV, Henry VIII, Mary Tudor etc., etc. One can also cite entire dynasties which reigned cruelly and shamefully in various European countries from Catherine de Medici to Louis the Great; from Philip the Cruel to Ferdinand the Mad; from Joan the Unfaithful to Charles the False and the Bourbons. India never had the misfortune to go through any such barbaric and bloody period.

History clearly establishes the fact that England did not bring the Indian people a superior civilization and better system of government. As to Britain's belief in having the right to conquer India (if such a right were conceivable in the twentieth century), we deny this entirely, since the Indian Empire was never acquired through English valour.

The English came to India primarily as merchants at the beginning of the seventeenth century. For over a century they quietly went about their business, enjoying Indian hospitality. They never dreamed of establishing a political dominion in the presence of the powerful Mohammedan Empire. In the end, however, the inevitable weakness produced by the decadence and fall of the Mughal Empire enabled the British to repay Indian generosity with treachery, intrigue and lies. The French and English merchants saw that it was more profitable to cease mere trading and to assume instead the role of 'protectors' of India. They thus began to intervene in the country's internal problems, allying themselves now with one, now with another of the political factions. This European intervention was completely unjust. India had never threatened, nor wished to upset, the progress of world civilization; nor had she ever planned an invasion of Europe. The country was just suffering from one of those periods of unrest which all nations go through in their various stages of evolution. If the British had allowed India to solve her difficulties alone, she would soon have returned to normal. Unfortunately for India and the world, the imperial thirst for power and personal greed of adventurers such as Dupleix, Bussy, Clive and Hastings imposed upon India a painful and degrading fate.

We do not propose to describe here the way in which England gained the Indian Empire. Those readers who would like detailed information will find sufficient material in the following works: Muir, *The Structure of the British Empire*; Stewart, *The History of Bengal*; Macaulay, *The Biography of Lord Clive*; Gleig, *The Biography of Warren Hastings*; Mill, *The History of British India*; Torrens, *Our Empire in Asia*; Bell, *The Sword of the Good Book*; etc. etc. (all in English).

India neither required, nor invited, nor accepted the English as protectors, governors or teachers. It was only a period of weakness, after 3,000 years of a highly developed and well organized national life, which the scheming European nations took advantage of. It was momentary fatigue alone which brought about the fall of India.

The following quotations will suffice to give an idea of the type of people and the manoeuvres and methods the 'benevolent British Empire' resorted to in its conquest of Asia. To understand what Britain's 'civilizing and humane mission' was, one must take into account the fact that the plundering and exploitation of the Indian people had been permitted for over a century by a group of merchants whose intrigues and treacherousness contributed to the acquisition of the vast empire. In a discussion on the proceedings adopted by the East India Company in 1787, Phillip Francis said:

> From business houses to forts—from these to fortifications—from fortifications to garrisons—from garrisons to armies—and from armies to conquest—English aggression followed this path in India with the inevitable result. Where there was no danger to ourselves, we always succeeded in finding some quarrel.

Sheridan, accusing Warren Hastings before the British Parliament in 1787, said:

> 'There was something in his operations which combined the unscrupulousness of the pedlar with the libertinage and perverseness of the pirate. One can find it in the politicians who scheme to gain military and political advantage, as a result of which we see a revolution brought about by sworn declarations, an army employed to make arrests, a potentate dismissed from power to facilitate negotiations, etc., etc. In this way they combined the false majesty of a blood-stained sceptre with commercial exploitation, gripping the truncheon with one hand whilst stealing with the other.'

Edmund Burke, the famous English orator and champion of liberty and justice said in his eloquent speech on Warren Hastings:

'Our conquest after twenty years is still totally unscrupulous. Young men, almost boys, rule there, having nothing to do with the natives. Their own connection with the country is to exploit and to cheat them in order to get rich quickly'.

As a result of British administration, Oude and Carnatic, two of the noblest and most prosperous Indian provinces, have fallen into a state of bad government and misery which cannot be compared with any other part of the country, let alone the world. (James Mill)*

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* These and other quotations from sources in English were given in his own Spanish translation by Roy, and they have been retranslated here from the Spanish version in *La India*. S.N.R.

CHAPTER TWO

The British Government of India

The British Government of India is a despotism, perhaps one of the worst in the world today. It is the violent domination of one race by another, totally foreign in language, way of life, tradition, religion and way of thinking. Brute force is the only thing which sustains it. India is governed by an official group of the dominating race, with no participation at all in the public administration by the governed people.

The Secretary of State for India—always an Englishman, resident in England—is the supreme mandatary of the imperial government of India. There is an Advisory Council, also residing in London, composed of fourteen members. No Indian was permitted to join this governing body until 1907, when a minority of two Indians were admitted. All the advisers are nominated by the Secretary of State, to whom they are responsible. The powers of the said body are reduced to 'advising'. The Secretary of State assumes absolute authority. He is the only one to occupy a seat in the British parliament which, under the appearance of theoretical democracy, constitutes the supreme power of the Indian empire. The council members are chosen from among the officials who have retired from India. The British Indian subjects have no representative in the English parliament. Whilst the English Treasury pays all the expenditures of the Colonial Secretary, e.g., for Canada, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa—autonomous regions of the empire—the enormous salary of the Secretary of State for India and of the members of his council, as well as all the expenses of the department in which even the cleaner is English, are paid by the Indian people. All the Colonies inhabited by the white race have their own parliaments, organized by themselves, politically independent of London. The fate of the hundreds of millions of Indians, however, is decided at Westminister without the presence of one single Indian. India is neither politically nor socially a member of the British empire, but is instead a dependency which is exploited for the benefit of the English people.

The Viceroy is the Chief Magistrate of the Indian Government. He is theoretically the representative of the King of England and Emperor of India. He rules over India in the name of the Crown; but in fact his appointment is decided by the party in power in the English parliament. His role is subordinate to the Secretary of State who is a member of the English cabinet. This means that it is the British parliament, in which the Indian people have no say at all, which directs the administration of India. The Viceroy holds a five year term of office, following established custom. At the conclusion of this period, another foreigner takes office in India, totally ignorant of the needs and interests of the millions of Indians whose fate he determines. The prime concern of the Indian government is to take as much as possible for England. . . .*

The Indian Empire is divided into fourteen provinces each with its own governor, invariably an Englishman. The Constitution of the British Government states that only a 'British European subject' can be appointed provincial governor. The Secretary of State chooses these officials without taking into account the opinions of the people. Very often a civil servant is appointed governor of a province. His behaviour in the civil service may have been contrary to native interests and therefore the people protest against his appointment, but to no avail. . . .

The Indian Civil Service consists of 1,283 English officials and 46 natives, almost all of whom occupy lower positions. The Medical Service has 5 per cent Indian employees, but also in non-important posts. The entry examination for both Services takes place in England. The maximum age for Indians to take the exam is twenty-two and they have to make their own way to England. In the Imperial Education Service, 196 posts of a total of 199 are held by Englishmen. Distinguished Indians who are honoured by foreign universities, as well as some of the most famous scientists and men of thought are able to work only in positions of low intellectual significance, always subordinate to the young Oxford and Cambridge graduates who could well be their disciples.

The executive capacity and judicial skill of the Indian officials are by no means inferior to those of the English. Also, whilst the English spend a lot of time on sport, hunting and socializing, their Indian subordinates go about their work, assuming entire responsibility, without any recognition whatsoever. Indian officials receive less salary than their English colleagues in the same position. The government pays no attention to the frequent complaints and petitions of the people for better working conditions and more rewards in the public service.

Despite their bragging what the British have in fact inflicted on India is their decadent judicial system. It has been said that the laws and courts established by the English in India are models for all the civilized world. However, while foreign nations may consider English laws and courts to be excellent, India has never needed them. Long before Britain emerged as a nation, India had evolved a judicial system which Britain has still to realize. The fundamental principles of most of the civil laws of British India are the highly developed ancient Hindu codes and local legal practices formulated by the great Hindu jurist Todarmull, in the reign of Akbar the Great in the sixteenth century. The Hindu laws of inheritance, codified by Hindu legislators long before the Christian Era, have yet to be surpassed by any modern European country. England still has to learn from 'semi–civilized' India that women can be property-owners in their own right. The disgraceful misapplication of these laws is the monumental achievement of British justice in India. We patiently wait for the English to return home taking with them the codes learnt in India and leaving the Indians to run their own affairs.

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*Five paragraphs from the text have been left out here which deal with the Viceroy's Councils. S. N. R.

We will now briefly examine the areas of British justice in India. A long time ago, the wise Englishman John Stuart Mill wrote: 'There is a tax imposed on the fees charged for legal proceedings'. By imposing stamp duty, the courts of British India deny justice to those who cannot afford it. In the middle of the last century, Macaulay the English historian whose lack of sympathy for India is well-known and whose position was that of legal member of the Viceregal Council of India, wrote: 'The Indian courts are ruinously costly. The expenses of lawsuits in England are so excessive that people prefer to submit to the losses rather than seek assistance from the law; and with all this the English people are the richest in the world and the Indians the poorest. The costs of litigation in the supreme court of India are at least five times greater than in England. A case which could be satisfactorily defended in Westminister for the cost of only eight pounds sterling would never be proceeded with in a High Court in India for less than forty pounds'.

Hindu society has always been founded on the concept of equality and unity of human beings. According to contemporary democratic principles, the whole world has the same right in established law. This is not so in British India, however; there laws have a different significance for natives and for the 'British European subjects'. Take these examples: 1. 'A British European subject of His Majesty is a person born, naturalized or domiciled in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland or in any other of the European and American colonies or possessions of His Majesty; or in the colonies of New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Natal or the Cape of Good Hope. 2. The son or legitimate descendant of any of these persons'. According to this classification, therefore, the Negroes of Africa or America, the Zulus of South Africa and even the Maoris of Australia,* all have privileges in the courts of British India, privileges which are denied the Indians. For example, a 'British European subject' has the right to Habeas Corpus, which the Indians do not have. A 'European' can be tried only by a high level magistrate. When a European criminal is brought for trial by a court presided over by an Indian, he can demand to be judged by a European jury, regardless of how minor his offence. (Act III of 1884). Due to the fact that very few Europeans live in the rural regions, it is practically impossible to find a sufficient number of men qualified to sit on such a jury. The Indian judge cannot therefore, proceed against the accused and he is often obliged to transfer the case to a white subordinate of his who, since he is 'white', is able to judge the accused without the co-operation of a jury. When a native brings a 'British European' subject before a court presided over by an English judge or jury, the court always sympathizes with the accused whose case in often dismissed. If the accusation is more serious, killing a native, for example, the magistrate passes a nominal sentence. Theodore Morrison, a staunch imperialist, says in his book *The Imperial Administration of India*: 'In the past, scores of Indians have been kicked to death by the English in India, but none of the murderers has received capital punishment for his offence'. In an article published in *The Daily Tribune* of Chicago, 25 May 1911, George A. Dorsey, the American Professor, wrote on this subject: 'It is pointless to conceal the fact that natives are frequently killed by the English in India. However, we can truthfully say that no Englishman in that country believes a jury composed of Europeans would sentence one of his compatriots for killing a native, for fear that the evidence would go against him'.

The subjects of the democratic British Empire in India are not permitted to settle, or even to travel, in other English colonies. Although hundreds of thousands of Indian workers are employed in the sugar plantations of Fiji (an English possession in the Pacific) which belong to the Australian capitalists, 'White Australia' keeps her doors firmly closed to Indians. Each year, thousands of poor Indian workers are sent to various British colonies with the blessing of the government of India. They are sent under indenture as slaves to produce wealth for the English exploiters and are treated with extreme cruelty. No Indian is allowed to travel to Canada or South Africa as a free worker or businessman; in Australia, an Indian is not permitted to put a foot on the sacred land, even though he may belong to the most respected society and have a high standard of education. Not

*An error in the original text; should be the Maoris of New Zealand. S. N. R.

long ago, one of the native Indian princes whose loyalty to Britain had been widely publicized, was prevented from going ashore in an Australian port. The gentleman did not wish to go into the interior of the colony: when his ship berthed, he merely wished to go on land for a walk. At the beginning of 1915, a group of Indian workers were not permitted to disembark in Vancouver. They had chartered a ship to Canada with the intention of living and working in that part of the Empire, since they were British subjects. However, they were regarded neither as human beings nor as British subjects and were sent back to India in the same ship escorted by the British navy, after having been detained two months in Vancouver during which time they suffered greatly. When they arrived in Calcutta they were prosecuted as revolutionaries who had tried to violate the laws of the Empire, and some were executed.

The government of India is the costliest establishment in the world. The English officials are the ones who benefit. The inequality of wages earned by the higher officials (mainly English) and the lower officials is lamentable. . . .* Apart from the large amounts paid to the officials in India, the government annually remits huge sums of money to maintain another government establishment which is situated in England. Meanwhile, the salaries of the native employees in the lower echelons of the public service are abysmal. . . .*

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* Parts of the paragraph have been left out which gave figures of the salaries of English officials and Indian clerks converted to pesos. S.N.R.

CHAPTER THREE

India's Economic Condition before and after British Occupation

In the first chapter we gave a general description of the economic prosperity of India before British occupation and of the unrest and anarchy which have been mentioned so often by English writers. At the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century, India was wealthy in spite of the uprising against the Moghul empire and the resulting turmoil. Business and industries flourished and India exported large quantities of manufactured goods to other Asian countries, Africa and Europe. Muslin, silk, woollen shawls, articles of bronze, etc., etc. brought fame to India throughout the world.

Indian exports could only be paid for with gold and silver ingots. In that period nothing was imported and Europe was unable to produce any product capable of competing on its merits in the Indian market.

India had maintained this balance of trade in her favour since earliest times. Pliny complained of the flow of gold into India in payment for the luxury goods exported from there to the Roman Empire, already at the time of Nero.

This lucrative trade from the Orient was organized in the different epochs by the Phoenicians, Egyptians, Greeks, Arabs, Venetians and by the Indians themselves. For many centuries during the Middle Ages the maritime nations tried to discover a sea route to India in order to trade with her direct and perhaps also to conquer her. As everyone knows, the discovery of America was accidental; Columbus' expedition was destined for India. The Dutch and the Portuguese continued searching for the route to India until Vasco da Gama succeeded via the Cape of Good Hope. The urge to steal the fabulous riches of India lured European adventurers to her shores four centuries ago. At this time, Europe was in a poor economic condition—not to speak of the cultural, political or social situation. For this reason, the belief that the European aggression in the Orient in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was a civilizing mission is mistaken and cannot withstand historical evidence. The 'British East India Company', was founded in 1600. In its first years of business, the Company earned 170% on the invested capital. The Company exported silk, fine fabric, indigo, spices, etc., etc. from India and imported only gold and silver ingots'. With regard to the type of trade with India at that time, the well-known English philosopher and historian Mill wrote: 'The material manufactured in India can be easily obtained in Surat (an old port on the western coast of India, where the first English trading business was established), but only ready cash or Chinese porcelain is acceptable in exchange'. In spite of this enormous drain of coinage from England, the Company was doing good business which resulted in a large and legitimate profit. At the close of the seventeenth century, the value of its shares rose to 500%. Nevertheless, the balance of trade was still in India's favour, since the country was industrial, selling its manufactured goods for cash money. The historian Orme wrote of the economic state of that time: 'Cotton was the principal industry of the country. The rupee, which is the equivalent of one shilling and four pence today, sold for double its value at least'.

On the other hand, England's economic condition in the corresponding period was the opposite. Mill said: 'In the first half of the seventeenth century, the English, burdened with bad government at home and riven by civil wars, could provide very little capital to expand or protect their trade and were unequal competitors of the Dutch'. According to Brooks Adams, an eminent authority on political economy, the whole of Europe was at the point of bankruptcy and suffered from the scarcity of cash money at the end of the seventeenth century, due to the enormous expenses of the long wars and to the continuous flow of gold in exchange for the goods imported from India. Since the reign of Augustus, the balance of trade between Europe and Asia has always been in favour of the latter. The lack of coinage in England at the end of the seventeenth century caused a decline in the value of money circulating at the time. Ruding, describing the history of the Industrial Revolution, wrote: 'The decline in value of the money in circulation and the forging of it reached such proportions that pure silver was worth scarcely half the minimum price and most of the coins in use were made of iron, bronze or copper plate'.

According to the authorities, the exportation of gold and silver to India ceased in 1757, the date of the battle of Plassey, as a result of which the English gained political dominance. That was a fatal date for the history of India. The long period of India's glory and supremacy was over and from then on the age of interminable disgrace and suffering took over. 'Rivers of gold flowed to England'. In the words of Brooks Adams, we can explain how England usurped the traditional commercial supremacy of India in a few years, because the latter found itself at England's mercy:

'Shortly after Plassey the riches stolen from Bengal began to arrive in London

> and the effect was instantaneous. The industrial revolution which distinguishes the nineteenth century from its predecessors began in fact in 1760. The wealth which had been saved through the centuries by the Indians was seized by the English and taken to London, just as the Romans took the spoils from Greece and the Black Sea to Italy. Nobody has yet been able to calculate the value of the stolen treasure, but it must have been worth millions of pounds sterling. The amount of treasure was enormous in comparison to the wealth of the precious metals belonging to the Europeans at that time'.

The value of the treasure stolen from India has been calculated approximately by various authorities on the subject. According to Montgomery Martin, a treasure valued at no less than £800,000,000 left India in the period from 1757 to 1838; William Digby estimated it at £1,000,000,000 for the years between Plassey (1757) and Waterloo (1815). The same authority says that in the last century India lost £5,000,000,000 in her trade with England. H. M. Hyndman, the leader of the English Socialist Party, says that: 'the stream of wealth from India over a twenty-year period amounted to £420,000,000'.

F. J. Shore, one of the Administrators of Bengal, wrote in 1857: 'India's days of prosperity are over; the immense wealth she possessed has been stolen; and her vitality has been harmed by our bad system of government in which the interests of India's millions of inhabitants have been sacrificed for the benefit of a few foreigners'.

John Sullivan, another prominent English official who served in India from 1804 to 1841, stated to the committee of the House of Commons in 1853: 'History has shown us that under native governors the economic condition of the Indian people was far better than now. From earliest times, India was very prosperous economically. Today, a tremendous amount of public tax money is spent on the civil service and the military which two elements did not exist in the India of the past. It is for this reason alone that our administration is a far greater burden than its predecessors'.

The above quotations confirm that until a few years after the British conquest, India's economic state was far better than that of England in the same period. They also confirm that England's present prosperity is due to the looting of India. We shall now examine the present economic conditions of the Indian people after over a century and a half of British administration. John Bright says: 'If in a fertile country, capable of producing all manner of crops and goods, the people were in a state of extreme poverty and suffering, there would certainly be something very wrong in the government of that country'. It is well known that India is one of the most fertile areas in the world and history has shown that it was possible to grow everything there. However, despite the fact that India's agricultural production is three times greater than the amount needed to sustain the population, the country is the only one in the world today to be continually in a state of famine. The cause of this is not merely some administrative error but the very polity forced on India.

Hunger is an infallible indication of the economic state of a people. During the period from the eleventh to the eighteenth centuries, there were 107 famines in Great Britain. In the corresponding period in India, there were only 18, which, in general, affected only certain areas. The English took possession of India in the middle of the eighteenth century; from then on up until the present date the Indian people suffered 37 famines affecting almost the whole country. These famines were caused by the abject poverty of the people and not by scarcity of essential foods. Dr Charles Cuthbert Hall, president of the Union Theological Seminary of New York, puts forward the following view of the famines in India: 'There is an abundance of food in India. The tragedy is that the people have been so crushed economically that they have become too poor to buy the food. Famine is ever present there; nevertheless, the same annual exportation of foodstuff to England continues, and the same flow of millions of dollars goes on year by year'.

India at the present time produces much more food than is needed for local consumption. There is an extensive railway network for transporting goods from one part of the country to another. This system of transportation is very profitable and the value of shares in some of the railways belonging to the English capitalists rose 250%. This lucrative business notwithstanding, 37 million people died of hunger in British India in the last century. From 1900 until the present date the number of deaths from hunger and epidemics resulting directly from it has reached the staggering figure of 20 million.

In order to give the readers some idea of the famine which is ever present in India, we quote below from the English writer, W. S. Lilly's *India and Her Problems*:

> I will never forget my experience of famine in India. I rode on horseback day after day past hordes of moving skeletons and saw piles of corpses in the streets being neither burnt nor buried or cared for in any way—partially devoured by dogs and vultures. The children—'the joy of the world'—look unbelievably sad: their mothers have abandoned them, the maternal instinct having succumbed to wolfish hunger. The sight of those children still haunts me today. Children—their eyes huge in the depths of their sockets; their flesh completely wasted away leaving only their bones, veins and shrivelled skin; their tiny bodies riddled with disease engendered by the hunger and malnutrition in which they were conceived and born.

The economic depression of the people is the sole cause of these disastrous famines in India. Due to the unlimited exportation of grain for daily consumption, the cost of living has continued to rise ever since India fell under the British yoke. In the last quarter of a century, the cost has risen almost one hundred per cent. In contrast, the people are earning less and less: the average per capita income of the Indian people fell from two pence per day in 1850, to three quarters of a penny in 1900; at the present day the situation is even worse. William Digby, in his famous work *Prosperous British India*, wrote: 'India under British administration is becoming a nation of beggars'. The destruction of commerce and industry by the English, the systematic policy of the British government not to permit India to manufacture any thing except primary products in order to support the industrial centres of Great Britain and, above all, the continuous drain of wealth for over a century and a half of British administration are the causes of India's economic tragedy. The following chapter will describe Britain's commercial policy in India. The taking of treasure to Britain has already been discussed. The British government's principle of bleeding India for England's benefit will now be examined, the prime example being the high cost to the Indians of supporting against their will foreign oppressors.

English writers have commented: 'Today, the Indian population is forced to pay much more than ever before. Most of their profits are spent in England, without their permission, to pay for the various loans which had been contracted there, also without their consent. These foreign debts grow larger each year. The truth is that the Indian population is in no sense the master either of its business transactions or of its government. The land taxes imposed by our administration reduce the people to a state of total slavery and dependence' (A. J. Wilson).

'India is fast becoming a country of perpetual poverty, due primarily to the incessant demands of the government—the oppression of the poor by the powerful empire builders'. (C. J. O'Donnell, *The Failure of Lord Curzon.*)

The British Government of India is certainly the costliest political organization in the modern world, whilst the people who suffer in order to maintain it are the poorest. The British subjects of India are forced to pay the largest contribution, which is never less than 30% of the public revenue. India's industries having been destroyed through England's greed, and trade and all that remains of it being in European hands, the only occupation remaining for Indians is agriculture, which supplies primary products for the factories in England. The British Government imposes an average tax of 35% on agricultural production, rising to 65% in irrigated areas. The duty on salt in which trade is totally monopolized by the government so that not one grain more than is needed daily is permitted to be produced in the country, surrounded by miles of ocean coasts, is 250% of the value.

The inevitable result of this levy is that the amount of salt consumed by the Indians is half the requisite amount to keep healthy. Sir William Hunter, former member of the Viceroy's Council, said: 'The bad policy of the government does not leave sufficient money for the sustenance of the worker and his family'.

At present, the government sends an annual 25% of the Treasury funds to Britain as 'home charges' and spends another 30% on the army which secures English dominance in India and enables the British Empire to expand her territories elsewhere. These funds were accumulated only by depriving the people of their daily bread. The enormous amount of money sent out in the guise of 'home charges' is spent in England to pay the salaries of the Secretary of State and the members of his Council and the expenses of the India Office. It is also used to provide pensions for the thousands of retired civilian and military officials and to pay back the loans contracted in Britain. After having seized all of India's useful wealth, the government adopted the policy of borrowing money in England, mortgaging Indian land in the process. These loans never reach India in the form of ready cash. They are spent in England itself to buy arms, materials for the railways, machinery, etc., etc. At the end of 1912–13, the total public debt of the Indian government in England amounted to £179,179,193, forcing the Indians to pay the yearly interest of £5,912,796 per annum. Every cent of this sum leaves India in coin form. The Indian people also send £10,000,000 annually to England as interest on the capital invested in the Indian railways, a much-praised monument to the British administration.

The character of Indian commerce has changed completely under the British regime. During the first days of the British occupation almost all the gold was taken out of the country by force; industries were ruined and businesses crushed by the oppressive methods of the government. The final result was the end of India's prosperity and the economic salvation of a bankrupt England. Today India has to import everything from overseas paying dearly for it with her agricultural products. These are, in turn, reimported using up the little money left. The whole business of importing and exporting, which is controlled by the British with official assistance, brings tremendous profits—in view of the volume of Indian trade—but is a total loss to India. The businessmen send every cent of the profits to England whilst the native consumers pay high prices for all imported goods, thus covering the interest on the English capital invested in the business. According to competent English authorities (Wilson, Morrison, Hyndman, Digby, etc.), the English trading firms make an annual profit of £40,000,000 which is sent out of India.

'England should pay part of the expenses of maintaining the huge army in India in the interests of the empire, rather than for India's benefit. This is not yet the case; the people still go hungry so that the world-wide British Empire may prosper'. (Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, former Prime Minister of Great Britain.)

The money spent by the Treasury on the army in India is a total loss for the people. India does not need this army in which no Indian may hold any but the lowest rank. No less than £4,000,000 are spent each year to pay the salaries of the soldiers and English officers and almost as much is paid to the English officials in the various departments maintained by the native states for the imperial service. In contrast, the total salaries paid to the Indian privates, who number at least four times more than the English, is barely £1,000,000. Furthermore, the English manufacturers and businessmen take about £3,000,000 out of the country each year to pay for arms and equipment for this army.

The military expenses of the Indian Government increase annually whilst the economic condition of the population worsens rapidly. Total expenses of running the army in 1884–5 amounted to £13,000,000; in 1899–1900 £17,600,000; in 1909–10 they rose to £19,000,000; in 1914–15 to £20,434, 915; the estimated cost for 1916–17 was £22,000,000. In the years following the outbreak of the war the cost rose tremendously. The other autonomous regions of the British Empire spend far less on an army which is theirs and the maintenance of which does not force them to send any revenue out of the country. The following comparison of expenses in 1914–15 is a good example: Canada, whose population has savings of £259 and an income of £29 per head, spent 1.5 million (5% of public revenue); Australians with savings of £262 and an income of £32, spent 2.5 million (10% of the total income of the government); in the United Kingdom with average savings of £320 per head and an income of £40, they spent 28.2 million (14% of the national Treasury); in India, meanwhile, where savings had dwindled to £11 with an income of £1.9 per head, the people were forced to spend £20,000,000 (almost 30% of the Public Treasury). The Indian army absorbs the total income of the country.

India had to pay every penny for the maintenance of the army which conquered it. The same people who had rebelled against British tyranny in 1857 were forced to contribute to the costs of suppressing the revolution. A method of conquest and imperialism without precedent in history! John Bright, speaking of the English parliament's policy of charging the Indian people with the cost of taking away their own freedom, said: 'I think that the imposition on the Indian people of £40,000,000 expenses to quell the unrest is most unjust. The revolution is the result of bad government by the parliament and the English people. If each one had to pay his fair share then the £40,000,000 would have to be taken from the people of this country'. Sir George Wingate, a military leader of that time, said on the same subject: 'The rebellion of the Hindu and Mohammedan soldiers was certainly justified. The British administrators were to blame, but the enormous cost is paid by India. England forced the Indian Government to pay all the costs of the army which had been sent to suppress the Indian rebellion. . . . Not one shilling of the British Treasury was ever spent on the defence of our Indian Empire . . . . There was worse to come, for six months the salaries of the soldiers who were sent to India to suppress the revolution were charged to the Indian Treasury and were recovered by the British army paymaster's office with interest'.

In conclusion, the most significant fact and the one which is entirely unknown to the outside world, is that India has been made to bear all the costs of Britain's imperialist wars and conquests. It is not intended to describe the assistance in manpower given by India for the purpose of enlarging the British Empire, but to give a general account of the loss to the Indian economy. The Indian government paid most of the expenses incurred in all the wars fought to extend the British Empire in Asia and Africa. In the last century, the flow of Indian finance for these military undertakings from which India gained nothing, was more than £100,000,000. The cost of the Egyptian campaign in 1882 to suppress the nationalist revolution was £1,700,000, of which the Indian Government paid £1,200,000. Listed below are the wars for which India paid most of the expenses despite the fact that she had nothing to do with English imperialist aggression: the First Afghan War (1838–42), a shameless attempt to conquer the independent state of Afghanistan; the First Chinese War (1839–40), to increase the disgraceful opium trade; the Persian War (1856), to pave the way for future conquest and aggression; the Abyssinian War (1857–68) for territorial conquest; the Perak Expedition (1875), in order to conquer the Malay Peninsula. India was forced to pay a great part of the expenses of these campaigns. The Second Afghan War (1878–80) to counter Russian influence in that country concluded in the establishment of a protectorate. India covered all the expenses of this campaign, with the exception of £5,000,000. The Egyptian War (1882) was a violation of national sovereignty aimed at taking away the rights of an independent people to direct internal policy without taking into consideration the interests of the rival foreign exploiters. India paid more than 80% of the total cost of this war. For the Sudan War (1885–6), a race for conquest between France and Britain, India paid almost everything.

CHAPTER FOUR

English Trade Policy in India

Without in the least discrediting the importance of 'Free Trade', many of the world's great political economists maintain that protection is necessary for all industries at certain times. All governments have seen fit to protect developing industries by way of tariffs or import duty where strong competition threatens the very existence of the local industry. The British Government of India is an unprecedented example of the violation of this principle of political economy. Although millions of people have died of hunger because of the continuous flow of valuable resources from their country, Britain has entirely neglected to protect Indian industry.

Of all the tragedy India has gone through under British rule, the greatest disaster is the total disruption of local commerce and industry by the foreign intruders who have sought personal advantage to the detriment of the indigenous population. From the time of the East India Company until today, Great Britain has followed a policy of stifling India's extensive and highly developed industries in order to gain control of world-wide trade. The world knows little of what India has been forced to contribute to enable England to become what she is today. 'From the beginning of time, no other enterprise has reaped such benefits for the conqueror as the looting of India,' thus said Brooks Adams, the famous political economist in his book *Laws of Civilization and Decay*.

India has always been a commercial and industrial country; at a time when the ancestors of modern Europe were still wearing skins, the manufacture of cotton, silk and woollen articles was highly developed in India. Cotton weaving was unknown in England until the middle of the seventeenth century; the need for cotton and calico materials was met by India via the Arab and Venetian merchants. Cotton weaving commenced in England in 1676, imitating the calico and printed cloth which was being imported from India. In order to establish and protect this new industry, England passed laws prohibiting the use of certain types of imported cotton. These protective measures remained in force until the inventions of Watt, Arkwright and Crompton, aided by the use of steam as a motivating power in factories, assured Lancashire the advantage of the cheapest production. . . .*

* One paragraph left out here. S.N.R.

According to all authorities, the English Industrial Revolution began in 1760. In that year the mechanical shuttle came into practice and coal replaced wood as fuel. The quick succession of inventions of Hargreaves, Crompton, Arkwright and Watts are still thought of as the wonders of industrial history. Here is the explanation of this marvel. Immediately after the Battle of Plassey in 1756, won by the British through their intrigue, a steady stream of gold began to flow from India to England, thanks to the merciless exploitation of Clive, Hastings and their accomplices and successors. Mill referred to the capital as 'the accumulation of human toil'. However, capital in the form of money is necessary as an incentive to direct human energy towards practical results. Indian gold was the means by which the English were able to realize their potential in terms of mechanical development. The inventions in themselves could never have been put into use without the necessary capital. Brooks Adams, writing on this particular point, said: 'Before the influx of gold from India and the extension of credit which resulted from this in England, there would have been insufficient funds to develop the mechanical inventions. If Watts had lived fifty years earlier, he and his inventions would have been lost'. This learned opinion was borne out by the case of Matthew Bolton, one of the first British inventors who lived at the beginning of the seventeenth century and who was confronted by insurmountable difficulties.

The English Industrial Revolution which was stimulated and motivated by enormous amounts of gold seized from India, advanced rapidly at the expense of the latter's trade and industry. As soon as England had established political dominance over certain parts of India, the policy of destroying local industry was adopted. This forced the local people who had been employed in Indian industry to produce primary products only, which were needed for England's growing industrial centres. England's colonial policy is best expressed in the following words: 'Not even a nail can be manufactured there (in the colonies); furthermore, the export of goods produced there is prohibited'. (*The System of National Political Economy* by List.) England's sytem of political economy was the principal cause of the uprising of the North American colonies against the Mother Country.

As far as trade relations with India were concerned, England followed a dual policy. On the one hand, domestic industry was protected by heavy import duty, and on the other, English merchants were permitted to flood the Indian market with manufactured goods imported there duty-free. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, beautiful objects hand-made in India competed with cheap, factory-made English goods. India was far ahead of her rival in the manufacture of cotton. Why, then, did she succumb to a newcomer in the field? Why didn't India benefit from the inventions of Hargreaves and Watts and block England's entry into the market? The answer is written in blood in the pages of history. India's cotton industry was swept away like all her other industries by the British invaders with their policy of monopoly, coercion and protective tariffs.

England champion of 'free trade', not only forbade the import of goods manufactured in India, but also passed laws against the export of machinery to India. 'Even after 1813, the restrictions on the export of machinery and the immigration of skilled workers to India were still in force' (Carey, *Principles of Social Science*.) The Industrial Revolution, which was so vital for the development of modern civilization, never reached India, whose people remained 'backward' and able only to promote the interests of another nation.

Apart from the artificial trade restrictions, England took away the wealth from India's richest provinces. The result was that the economic state of the people, although better than it is today, did not allow for capital to be invested in the new mechanical inventions. Whilst industrial development in England was stimulated by various means, the government in India, with its policy of intrigue, undermined the vital forces of the country, which resulted in political and economic chaos. Whilst the English continued to advance due to the system of popular education introduced by the government to promote knowledge and thus to benefit from the mechanical inventions, India's trade and industry were exploited and destroyed by the British merchants.

By bribing the corrupt Mohammedan regime, the East India Company was able to gain duty-free control of trade in the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the centres of cotton and silk manufacture. The local merchants, on the other hand, had to pay heavy duty. Clive secured for the Company the right to intervene in the internal politics of the country, as a reward for his military services to the traitor Mir Jafer Ali and his accomplices in the intrigues to overthrow the young and inexperienced ruler Shirajadawla. From 1769 onward the directors of the Company planned to destroy India's cotton and silk industry. Severe laws were drawn up forbidding weavers to work anywhere else other than for the Company. Well-known English historians and even some high officials of the Company have written of the disastrous effects to the silk and cotton industry in Bengal caused by the implementation of these laws. An apologist such as Macaulay wrote in his *Life of Lord Clive*: 'The natives have never experienced so evil a tyranny'. William Bolt, a witness to these events, wrote: 'The poor weavers are oppressed in many ways by the Company's agents. They are fined, imprisoned, whipped, forced to work, etc., as a result of which the number of weavers in the country has greatly diminished'.

Mir Kassim Ali was the last Mohammedan ruler of Bengal who had a clear understanding of the situation and respected the dignity and responsibility of his throne. He was sufficiently astute and patriotic to understand the gravity of the country's situation and lost no time in conceiving the only real remedy for saving the people from impending destruction. At first he tried to appeal to the goodwill of the high company officials, indicating the harm being done to the people by the unscrupulous methods by which the various agents profited from their monopoly of the trade. They paid no attention to his appeals. The only solution left to Mir Kassim was to abolish the duty on all locally made and imported products, in order to give local goods equal opportunity in competing with foreign products. This act of the sovereign government represented a crisis for the Company and had disastrous consequences for the monarchy. War was immediately declared on Mir Kassim, who was defeated and dethroned thanks to the treachery of the foreign military leaders in his service, who had been corrupted by the Company's gold. Finally, the country was completely deprived of political power and forced to make itself useful as sole producers of the primary products needed for the English industries centres.

Not content with having destroyed India's political and economic structure, England continued to prohibit the import of the few goods still produced in the recently acquired empire. Until 1813 an enormous import duty of 40% was levied on fine Indian cotton, whereas the duty on raw cotton for use in the British mills was ten shillings per 100 lbs. In later years the excessive duty on cotton was lifted, but only after India had lost all possibility of exporting to England anything other than raw materials—agricultural products.

England became a 'free trader' after having secured her industrial dominance. When, by the abovementioned protective measures, England had reached a sufficiently high level of industry, unlimited supplies of raw materials were needed and the policy of 'free trade' was adopted. As a result, India, being part of the enlightened and liberal 'pax Britannica', could not be protective. All Britain's other overseas dominions followed their own fiscal policy as soon as they were given political autonomy and did not hesitate to exclude the products of the 'mother country' in order to protect their own industries. But India's fiscal policy is, like all her others, dictated by Whitehall in London.

The few figures given below will give some idea of how India's cotton industry crumbled for lack of protective measures and because of the emergence of the manufacturing centres of Lancashire, who owe their very existence to the gold taken from India and to the strict protective tariffs.

Exports from Madras of cotton made in India were valued at 12 million pesos in 1870; three years later this amount had fallen to 300,000 pesos. The Central Provinces, which still produce enormous quantities of raw cotton, exported material to the value of 1,100,000 pesos in 1878–9, which was reduced to 400,000 pesos in 1890–1. During this period, three cotton mills began production, employing 805 looms and 72 spindles. The official report for that year (1890–1) says: 'In recent years the local industry of embroidered cloth and strong cotton fabrics for which the district of Nagpur (Central Provinces) was famous, have dwindled'. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Presidency of Bombay exported from the port of Surat alone fine linen cloth to the value of 6,400,000 pesos per annum. By the middle of the same century, the value of exports from the same port had fallen to 80,000 pesos per year. Bengal, which had been making Dacca muslin since time immemorial, ceased to export cotton products by the end of last century. Although approximately 25% of the cloth used in the country is spun by Indians, most of the thread which is used in the manufacture of the cloth is imported from Manchester. . . .*

Until 1871, the British government of India imposed an average duty of 5% ad valorem on all imported goods. This was exclusively a customs duty, not designed to protect national industries. This small aid to Indian industries which, in any case, were practically non-existent, worried the Lancashire weavers. In a memorandum (1875) to Lord Salisbury, the then Secretary of State for India, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce demanded the abolition of these light import duties in India, which were a source of income for the government of the country. It was said that due to this import duty 'indirect protection had been given to the cotton industry in India and that many new factories were being protected there'. Slight hesitancy on the part of Lord Northbrooke, Viceroy of India at that time, to sacrifice a source of income for his government in order to comply with the demands of the greedy Lancashire egoists cost him his job. In 1877, the British Parliament dictated a resolution ordering the Indian government to revoke the import duties on cotton goods. The argument was that 'duties of a protective character are contrary to a healthy trade policy'. This resolution was sent to the Indian government with a dispatch from Lord Salisbury who declared 'that through import duties the weaving industry in India would be stimulated to a growth that was neither natural nor healthy'.

The Indian government, under Lord Lytton, abolished import duty on cotton products and thus lost a considerable source of revenue, even though the current war with Afghanistan was costing India a great deal of money and the country itself was experiencing a famine which caused the death of seven million people. Sir John Strachey, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Lytton government stipulated as regards the formulation of the fiscal policy: '1. That there should be no duty which could protect the indigenous industry. 2. That no duty be levied on any import to India which could be produced there, without imposing excise duty on Indian goods in compensation. 3. That raw materials destined for English factories be exempted from customs export duties in India'.

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* Two short paragraphs are left out here. S.N.R.

A deficit of more than 20,000,000 pesos in the 1894 Budget forced the Indian government to support the English Liberal government. The duty of 5% ad valorem was re–established on imported goods, including cotton materials and yarn. Violent protests by the Lancashire voters shook the English parliament once again and the Cobdenists forced the Indian government to impose excise duties of equal value on locally-made cotton goods. No other country in the world has ever imposed restrictions on her own industries to safeguard the interests of foreign merchants! But India's wealth is not her own; England is the supreme ruler.

Two years later the import and excise duties were reduced to 3.5%. The same year saw the abolition of export duty on raw cotton, as well as on other primary products, for example, skins, wool, materials for paper manufacture, etc., etc. Thus Lancashire was able, in the name of 'free trade', to import Indian cotton at the lowest possible price, provided that the nominal duty of 3.5% did not affect the cost of production. Due to the export to England of fine Indian cotton and also to various restrictions concerning work, it was impossible for Indian manufacturers to produce fine quality linen. Inferior Indian cotton products were able to compete with English fabrics in one-third of the market only. Since Lancashire controlled two-thirds of the fabric market, it was possible to permit India to sell grey cloth at a lower price. Indian manufacturers were therefore obliged to seek markets for their linen in China and the coasts of Africa and Arabia. However, they still had to pay duty on these exported goods. Indian manufacturers were thus at a disadvantage even in foreign markets where they competed with products from other countries which had not been taxed by their own governments.

At the beginning of this century, the Indians made a desperate effort to restore indigenous industry. The Swadeshi Movement began by boycotting all types of imported goods and, with ardent patriotism, the Indian people decided to use the coarse, locally produced material, instead of the fine cloth from Manchester. This gave impetus to the local cotton industry which made some progress in the early stages. However, the market was flooded by 'grey cloth' from Lancashire, the import of which was assisted by the government which legislated against the demonstrations by the public and the press. Despite the Indian people's efforts to salvage the local cotton industry, the measures taken by the country's own government which hindered Indian manufacturers both internally and externally, were a severe blow to the Industry. In 1905, total profits from the Indian cotton factories amounted to 24,000,000 pesos, but after five years of struggle with the same government which saw itself as the natural protector of the country, the profit fell to an insignificant 4,000,000 pesos. The only reason for this decrease was the English government's hostility towards the slightest industrial development in India.

The English parliament was strongly opposed to the 4% tariff imposed on imported cotton goods granted to India in 1917 so that the enormous war loan of 1,000,000,000 pesos could be forced on the starving Indian people. The 'War Cabinet' headed by Lloyd George was faced with a grave crisis. It was only through the astute diplomacy of the former leader, Mr Asquith that the political fall of Lloyd George was prevented. The stipulation made by Mr Asquith gave the tariff law the character of a temporary war measure to be revoked as soon as peace was established, enabling England to produce and export unlimited quantities of cotton goods. The following chapter will compare the benefits to India and England from this policy.

The following figures quoted from *The History of Cotton Manufacturing* by the English writer Bains are unequivocal evidence of how the English protection policy destroyed the Indian cotton industry.

Table of import duty on Indian cotton goods entering England.

Year	White calico by the roll	Muslin: percent ad valorem
1787	16. 10. 0	18. 0. 0
1797	18. 3. 0	19. 0. 0
1799	26. 9. 1	30. 3. 9
1802	27. 1. 1	30. 16. 0
1806	71. 6. 3	37. 7. 0
1813	85. 10. 1	44. 10. 0

The amounts are in pounds sterling.

The disastrous effect of these protective tariffs is clearly shown in the figures given in conjunction with the evidence presented by Mr G. G. de H. Larpent to the Parliamentary Committee.

Cotton imports from India to Great Britain.

1814	1,266,608 pieces
1821	534,485 pieces
1828	422,504 pieces
1835	306,086 pieces

Cotton exports from England to India.

1814	818,206 yards
1821	19,138,726 yards
1828	42,822,077 yards
1835	51,777,277 yards

CHAPTER FIVE

England's Gift to India

The 4% tariff on cotton goods imported into India which was authorized by the British Parliament in the third year of the European war, was declared by all the world to be a manifestation of England's goodwill towards the prosperity of her Great Dependency. This new legislation was publicly announced with the intention of making people believe that it was trying to help and protect the Indian cotton industry. Considering the sad story of the way England destroyed India's old established and very highly developed trade and industry, we cannot but be doubtful of this attitude of 'goodwill'. We shall examine the motive which induced England, whose trade policy has always been contrary to the industrial prosperity of her Great Dependency, to take such a measure, which was apparently prejudicial to a considerable part of her own national industry. . . .*

The Prime Minister, Llyod George, as well as Mr Chamberlain, India's Secretary of State, admitted during the debate on the legislation that in order to obtain more help from the Indians, it would be necessary to concede them at least this small tariff. At the end of his speech concluding the debate, Lloyd George declared: 'We still need her money and in order to get it we should not bargain over conditions'. This right to charge an insignificant tax on one type of goods out of the quantities imported from England was granted the Indian government only if it agreed to impose on the starving population the heavy burden of contributing the sum of one thousand million pesos to the 'war loan'. India was used as a source of men and money so that England could make war, just as in the past she had been forced to contribute the blood and life of her people so that Great Britain could gain world power. . . . *

The World War revolutionized the political structure as well as the economic conditions of the nations; during the last years of the European conflict, England was unable to hold her monopoly profitably on the Indian market. The tonnage capacity of the merchant navy was so greatly reduced due to two years of war, the transport of troops and allies as well the alarming actions of the German submarines, that a complete readjustment of overseas trade policy became essential. In the concluding years, Japan became considerably active in cotton manufacture and from the time war began in Europe, it took over an appreciable part of Indian trade. Japan gained this advantage because of the comparative cheapness of labour and the considerable supply of ships. The English cotton industry depended on America, Egypt and India for raw materials. Until the end of the second year of the war, the transportation of great quantities of raw cotton across the Atlantic was almost impossible due to the shortage of ships: all the cotton available was used in the manufacture of explosives. The lack of ships and the danger of submarines also pushed the Egyptian and Indian supplies out of easy reach. The British Government understood that trade relations would have to be sacrificed to military demand and allowed the national industrial centres to suffer temporarily. But without protection to the import of raw materials and the export of finished products successful competition with the cheaper Japanese goods on the Indian market was impossible.

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* One paragraph left out here. S.N.R.

* Two sentences left out here. S.N.R.

Rather than give the yellow ally, Britain's exclusive right to exploit India, Lloyd George preferred to reach a temporary agreement with the great Dependency. Either Japan or India would have right of entry into the market monopolized by John Bull. However great the apparent friendship between England and Japan, which, according to the conditions of the alliance drawn up between the two powers, comprised the task of guarding British interests in East Asia until the end of the European War, it could never be hoped that Britain would give up any of the commercial advantages acquired there. On the other hand, India as part of the British Empire, was permitted to develop her industry a little as all products of such development would be commandeered by England under the pretext of 'wartime necessity'. Besides, at the end of the war it would be easy to pass some convenient laws to restore to Lancashire the delightful right of clothing millions of Indians with the very cotton produced in India. Although this paltry import duty was temporary disadvantage to the English cotton industry, it can be seen that the long-term well-being of the industry had been assured. War could not be won with gold alone. All the manpower had to be summoned so that England could come out of this titanic struggle with her prestige and empire intact. During the war, Great Britain's manufacturing centres were permitted to produce only arms and ammunition. All available shipping was used in services directly connected with the war—transporting troops, arms, ammunition and other military supplies to various battlefronts and transporting the materials to make these essentials, from the farthest corners of the world. India's vast human potential, as well as the remainder of her wealth had, naturally, to be utilized towards this end. Lloyd George evidently had no illusions about the 'spontaneous loyalty' of the millions of Indians who had suffered constant famine and been mercilessly exploited by England for over a century and a half. However, in order to win the war, Great Britain had to make use of India's resources. The diplomatic cunning of the English political leaders discovered a plausible way to suck the last drops of blood from India's dying economy. One of their shrewd proposals was the duty on cotton goods imported into India. . . . *

India's total population is 315,000,000; the annual per capita income is scarcely eighteen pesos. People in such a depressed economic situation have been forced to contribute 1,800 million pesos as a war loan—for a war in which the Indians have gained nothing but continuous suffering. Apart from this cash loan, India's enormous contribution in the form of raw materials and foodstuffs has yet to be counted. According to the calculation of the same English official, 40% of the Indian population had to fast for at least six months a year. In order to pay this loan imposed by the richest nation in the world, two-thirds of the Indian population have added two more months of hunger to their already sad lives. The British bureaucrats fully realized that 'to lend' this enormous quantity of money would be disastrous for the Indians in their present state. However, the empire needed the money and the Dependency, which was unable to put forward any opinion on the administration of her own affairs, was forced to pay. This is the state of liberty and democracy of these truly oppressed people which resulted from the Sacred War.

By moving part of the Lancashire industry to Bombay, a considerable number of ships were freed and also a large number of English workers who were employed in the transportation and production of war supplies. At the same time, the remainder of the vast Indian human potential which had not been employed directly in military service could be utilized to produce money for the English capitalists and to earn salaries which would enable some of the Indian workers to contribute to the war loan and to pay thousands of other levies which would undoubtedly be imposed on them so that England could make up her war loss.

Well then, how did India benefit from the so-called protective tariff? Import duties on all types of cotton goods have augmented the revenue of the Indian Government by nine million pesos annually; meanwhile, the same government will have to pay fifteen million pesos per year as 3.5% of the interest on the loan. As a second advantage derived from this policy, it could be thought that the cotton industry would progress under the so-called tariff protection, thus

* One paragraph left out here. S.N.R.

improving the economic condition of the people. It could also be said that the factories already in existence would grow and develop into large enterprises and that new factories would be established throughout the country. However, sufficient capital is needed to establish and develop new factories or to improve already existing industry. Where and how can one find the necessary capital from a people who earn less than a cent per day and who are forced to support extensive military campaigns and to pay gigantic loans and the resulting interest?

Many English writers have confessed that 'the history of the British administration in India led to famines caused, not by lack of essential commodities, but by the people's lack of cash' (Lord Hamilton). After having exhausted every possible Indian source for England's industrial development, the government granted India a token allowance for industrial development. It is the same thing as boasting about lending crutches to a man after having intentionally broken both his legs.

There is no doubt that the import duty will give life to the Indian cotton industry; but due to the lack of sufficient capital in the country, English capital will be invested and the English will benefit. This is the situation with the small wealthy concerns in India today, e.g., the railways, the tea plantations, the factories for weaving and packing jute and the coal, copper, iron and other minerals. English capital exploits all and the rights and privileges of the English merchants reign supreme.

Because of the traditional dexterity of the Indian weavers and the large volume of production of raw cotton in the area, the few cotton factories of the Presidency of Bombay are the only remaining local industries run by Indians and maintained by Indian capital. In spite of Lancashire's incessant hostility, this small centre of national industry has continued production ever since its foundation in the middle of last century, even with a little success. In order to be a viable business, all available capital in the country has been invested in this enterprise; however, foreign capital would be needed to stimulate greater production.

Granted that such investment of foreign capital has been made, the exploitation of the Indian worker by foreign capitalists would return very little prosperity to the country. The present value of shares in some of the Indian railways belonging to English corporations has risen by 250 per cent. Nevertheless, the people whose country is the cause of such wealth, starve to death by the thousands each year.

Exact data are not yet available to enable calculation of the amount of money taken out of India during the four war years. Leaving aside the value of what India was forced to pay in materials, the following official figures may give readers an approximate idea:

Paid till the end of 1916 as charge for the military equipment imported from England to be used by the Indian army which was sent to the battlefronts. . . .	$500,000,000
Lent to England from the reserve funds of the Indian government (1916). . . .	$270,000,000
War loan in the same year. . . .	$840,500,000
War loan extended to everybody as India's 'gift' to imperial reserves. . . .	$1,000,000,000
Total pesos	$2,610,500,000*

According to an article published in the famous London magazine *The Twentieth Century and After* of February 1917, India lost 2,500,000,000 pesos in two and a half years of war.

The effect of this tremendous outflow of money from a country whose finances were already almost exhausted was immediate. The prosperity supposed to issue from the import tariff proved illusory. Already the helpless Indians had begun to feel the pinch of inevitable shortages. We quote below the opinion of the English press on the immediate effect produced by the imperial swindle which is dealt with in this chapter.

'India's economic situation is serious and alarming. It is ridiculous to congratulate ourselves that the war loan has been a great success in India, while the cost of food has risen so much that the whole country finds itself on the brink of disaster. The principal cause of this poverty and suffering is the tremendous amount of foodstuff being sent from India to Mesopotamia and other eastern war fronts. But India cannot go on starving any longer'.—*India*, London, 12 October 1918.*

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* Total as given in Spanish text is pesos $1,810,000,000 which is a wrong total of the figures given in the table. This may be a printer's error, or due to the author's oversight. S.N.R.

* A second quotation from *India* has been left out. S.N.R.

CHAPTER SIX

Education in British India

A year ago, in an interview for the *Manchester Guardian*, Britain's Liberal Party newspaper, the famous Hindu poet Rabindranath Tagore said: 'All Indians feel, and all sincere observers of the British Government in India must admit, that you English have found it convenient to keep us weak and ignorant by slowing down the progress of education in our country. You do not like us to go to the laboratories to study practical science'.

The defenders of the British Empire shout deafeningly that under the British regime the Indian people enjoy all modern educational facilities. The imperialists argue that before British conquest India was illiterate and had no system of public education. We do not believe that the English, or any other foreign government, could justify its dominance over a faraway people even if it were to adopt a policy which was not so tyrannical and disgraceful as that which we are going to expose in this chapter.

History has shown that the Indian people under Hindu monarchs were almost all literate and educated. The Hindus enjoyed reading sections of the holy scriptures daily. During that time, illiteracy was almost unknown. Education was always free in India. It was always the principal duty of the state to maintain the Brahmins (teachers). If a Brahmin were to accept payment in any form for his teaching, he would lose his place of honour. In the fourth and third centuries before Christ, there were large universities in India maintained by a quarter of the Public revenue. Thousands of resident students were educated free. At the beginning of the Christian era, the famous universities of Taxila, Ujjain, Benares, Ajanta and Nalanda were recognized as the world's great centres of education and culture. Famous students from Egypt, Greece, Rome, Persia, China and Japan studied there. In the fifth century 70,000 resident students were educated at the University of Nalanda alone, entirely free. Well-known Chinese students and travellers such as Hiuen Tsang and Fa Hien lived many years in this intellectual centre and studied Buddhist philosophy. The ruins of this large and majestic building are still to be seen today as an archaeological wonder. During the Mohammedan period, the internal administration of the university, which was in Hindu hands, did not alter greatly and in this way the ancient system of education was almost entirely preserved. The Indian people continued to prosper under both the Mohammedans and the Hindus. It was possible to live with a minimum of work. Consequently the people had sufficient time for learning. The government provided for the professors and teachers in each group so that all people could be educated.

However, when we examine the level arrived at by the British Government in its inspired duty of educating its Indian subjects, we need make no comparison between the former state of education and the present. We only have to analyse the progress of education in India under the British regime. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, literacy in India equalled that of contemporary Europe. English historians such as Elphinstone and Hunter and European travellers like Tavernier pay special attention to this point. However, since the middle of the eighteenth century when India had the misfortune to fall under the British Yoke, the progress of education began to go backwards, whilst in Europe education progressed rapidly with the assistance and patronage of the respective governments.

The British Government of India has already been in power over a century and a half, but educational facilities can scarcely be compared with those developed in Japan in less than fifty years. To date, 90% of Japanese children are attending school, whilst only 15% attend school in British India. In the illustrious British Empire of India, 85% of boys and 95% of girls of school age have no facilities whatsoever for education. Education in British India is neither universal, nor free, nor compulsory. In a few of the Native States, the authorities maintain a system of public education, despite numerous obstacles placed in their way by the English rulers. In British India, there is a primary school for each 11.5 square miles and for each 2,400 people where the son of a villager who earns one cent a day may learn the alphabet on payment of monthly fees of ten to fifteen cents. In the year just prior to the war, the British Government in India spent £21,625,765 on the army and only £2,700,000 on education. . . .*

The fundamental principle of British Government policy on education is still that which was expressed over a century ago by a director of the East India Company: 'We have just lost the American colonies through our stupidity in permitting them to establish schools and colleges there; we must not repeat the same mistake in our administration of India'. The British Empire is able to exist in India only through the ignorance of the people which is carefully preserved. The central idea of the English Government's imperial policy is to maintain this state of 'sublime ignorance' wherever possible. A people lacking in educational facilities and the opportunity to examine the significance of the events which surround them, can be exploited without the slightest risk of their demanding natural rights and adequate payment for their work.

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* One paragraph left out here. S.N.R.

Education is controlled by the English bureaucrats as are all the administrative departments of British India. The high positions in the Education Department are always held by Europeans. Here are the official figures (of appointments in high positions in the Education Department):

Period	Total No. of Employees	No. of Indians
1896–1900	29	None
1901–1905	56	None
1906–1910	92	None
1911–1916	115	7 (?)

The directors of education are invariably Englishmen who have very little knowledge of the native language. The Education Department employs 379 Europeans and fourteen Indians. Primary education, in spite of the fact that it is not free, is under executive control. The same English official who does not usually speak one word of the native language is the executive authority. He is the collector of taxes, dispenser of justice, prefect of police, registrar of legal documents, prosecutor-general, director of primary and preparatory schools, etc. etc. in every district, each one of which has a population of between 500,000 and 1,000,000.

In the vast British Empire there are only five universities in operation and two being planned, which are not centres of high scientific or literary learning but rather official organizations which hold exams and confer degrees and diplomas. The exams are maintained by the students, who pay high entrance fees. These institutions have the exclusive right of conferring degrees and diplomas. No matter how intelligent the student, or how deep his knowledge, the government only recognizes university qualifications. In a country of 1,773,168 square miles and 315,132,153 people, there are five schools of medicine and four of engineering which have facilities for only 1,822 and 1,360 pupils respectively. These schools charge such high fees that most middle class young men are unable to pursue their chosen career because of lack of finance. Ironically, all these educational institutions were founded and are supported by donations from Indians. In an agricultural country such as India has been forced to become, it is ludicrous that there should be only three agricultural schools with 267 enrolled students. The Indian Government spends £10,357 annually on these schools; that is to say, that the imperial British Government of India spends 0.003 cents per head a year in order to teach the latest scientific methods in agriculture.

It may be imagined that the spirit of democracy and freedom is nurtured in the educational institutions. This is not the case in British India. One example will suffice to convince readers of the truth of 'British justice', even in intellectual matters. The Medical College of Calcutta is the largest of its type in the country. There is no need to mention that it is an official organization, since there is only one native on the staff of 27 professors. This well equipped college and the splendid hospitals where hundreds of patients are cured owe their origin and existence to private donations from native Indians. Nevertheless, the British Government proclaims itself lord of all. What a medieval belief!—The body, the mind and even the soul of the slave are the exclusive property of the master! In the college in question, there are two distinct sections: one civil, the other military. Native students are only permitted to enrol in the first, the second being open only to Europeans and Eurasians who are allowed to study in either section. Indian students have to graduate from the university before entering the medical college where they have to study six years paying various high fees which only a few of the middle class can afford. On the other hand, any young European or Eurasian may be admitted to the military section without any university qualification. A nominal elementary science exam is their only prerequisite. The military course is completely free of charge and lasts only four years. And worse still—students of the military section reside in the college for the four years of the course, for which the government pays all their expenses. They are also given an allowance from public funds. Indian students have to pay enormous fees and study for six years, often at the expense of their health. After all this they have to pay an entry fee for their examination which lasts six months and which is so difficult that barely twenty students are able to obtain their diploma which will authorize them to practise medicine. Only two of these fortunate twenty students are chosen for the Government Medical Service which pays 40 pesos per month, rising after ten to fifteen years to 300 pesos. On the other hand, after enjoying four years as government guests, the students of the military section leave the college without taking any examinations and are employed in the Military Medical Service in which they hold the rank of lieutenant at the monthly salary of 200 pesos which rises according to rank. . . .*

India's total bankruptcy, which resulted from British exploitation, has ruled out the possibility of a national education which could have been supported by industry. It has already been mentioned that the few educational institutions which remain in British India are, in fact, private and the largest of these are supported by Indian donations. Unfortunately, these can neither exist independently nor form a sphere of intellectual activity which could give positive results, since the government does not permit the growth of private institutions. The government does not want more than a certain number of persons educated, nor does it want them to learn things other than those selected by it. The English ruler is not content with being the absolute master of the physical bodies of the Indians, but also wants to destroy their intellectual initiative since with education they would rebel against oppression. Educational institutions which are established to spread the national spirit are always manipulated by the British Government in India. Private schools, which do not recognize the authority of the Education Department, are not permitted to send their pupils to the universities to sit for the examinations to obtain the diplomas without which their education and knowledge are financially worthless. Any school which tries to organize its courses independently is disapproved of and quickly placed under observation by the secret police as if it were an illegal organization. This awkward situation gives rise to many other disadvantages, which bring about the closing of the school.

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* One paragraph is left out which describes inequality in the School of Nursing. S.N.R.

When the popular leaders had convinced themselves that nationalism could not produce results unless it were taught in educational institutions, they founded the National University in Calcutta, India's principal city. In order to remain outside government control, the university refused to accept any official financial assistance and its students decided not to receive official diplomas. A group of the most brilliant young intellectuals volunteered to run the university. Hundreds of students who were more concerned with true learning than with obtaining an official diploma to entitle them to a paltry wage, enrolled at the National University. The strong feeling of nationalism enabled many schools to be built throughout the country. All these schools became members of the central organization whose nationalistic methods of teaching they adopted. They asked nothing more of the government save permission to educate the public at their own expense and with the voluntary assistance of the patriotic young teachers. This was not to be. The government was against this scheme which opposed the policy of keeping the population in a state of ignorance. The national movement soon began to encounter all sorts of problems created by the government. Students at the National University and the many schools run by it were persecuted on any pretext, such as for conspiring against the government. The parents and even the relatives of these students were sacked from their jobs in government offices and English businesses. Even teachers known to be reliable and well-educated were constantly under the surveillance of the secret police if suspected of sympathizing with the revolutionary cause. Finally, the government succeeded in stigmatizing the whole movement for national education. It was accused of being an organization to foster discontent and general unrest. Because of the scheming against this educational movement, the people who had agreed to assist it financially, withdrew their support. Within a short time, the movement was faced with such insurmountable difficulties that it could go on no longer. This is typical of the fate of many private efforts to enlighten the millions of Indians who were forced to remain ignorant by a nation which boasted of its 'mission to civilize the world'.

Mention must now be made of the few facilities which exist for public education in British India. Teaching is conducted in the English language. Even the history of India, which is taught in primary schools, is written in this foreign tongue. In order to learn what went on in his own country a few years earlier, an Indian child must learn a foreign language, depriving himself of the chance of reading the many magnificent history books written in his own language and which tell the truth rather than describe the alleged benefits of the British conquest. The government does not approve of these books. Books used in primary and preparatory school are written under official supervision so that the young students realize that their country was saved from anarchy by the 'benevolent' British occupation invited by their own people. They are taught that the British Government is the saviour of their country and that they are incapable of governing themselves. General education is based on other lies and absurdities of this type. Textbooks are aimed at destroying the independence of the mind and at restricting the freedom of thought of the young students. The schools in British India are only factories for crushing the young mind and for producing groups of mechanical clerks. They turn out assistants with neither initiative nor willpower who work for meagre salaries, in government offices and European businesses. This chapter concludes with some lines by an Englishman who wrote about British Government policy on education in India:

> The morality of the imperialist administration must be judged from this point of view. Statistics regarding public education in British India reveal that England has committed a crime against humanity. She has forcibly kept 315,000,000 people in a state of ignorance. For the future of humanity it is demanded that this dumb slavery be abolished. Human dignity can no longer

allow a country which was once 'the light of the world' to continue sacrificing itself for the materialistic interests of a government of exploiters. (W. W. Pearson, *For India*, published in Japan in 1917).*

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* William Winstanlay Pearson (1881–1923) was a member of the London Mission Society who taught for some time at Calcutta and Santiniketan. Was a close associate of Rabindranath Tagore, accompanied him to Japan and translated some of his works into English. Besides *For India* which was banned on publication by the government, he also wrote *Dawn of a New Age* and *Santiniketan and the Bolpur School of Rabindranath*. S.N.R.

CHAPTER SEVEN

India's Place in the British Empire

The world has heard of the doctrine that the British Empire does not entail one nation ruling over another, but rather that it is a federation of free peoples. Therefore, India, which of course forms part of this democratic federation, has no right to demand political independence. In any case, India's cause cannot draw the world's attention in as great a way as those of the Czechoslovaks, Yugoslavs, Armenians and others. However, the fundamental principle of the British Empire is eloquently expressed by an English writer in the following words: 'It is the concept of a federation of the white members of the empire. A federation which has complete freedom to exploit the non-Europeans in the empire and to perpetually treat them with contempt, considering them inferior' (W. W. Pearson). The importance of India for the prosperity and very existence of the British Empire is wellknown. English statesmen have admitted it many times. They have declared that India is 'indispensable for our existence', 'our magnificent dependency', 'the most brilliant jewel in the British crown', 'the vault in the imperial British arch', etc. etc. Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India (1899–1905) said that 'without India, Great Britain would be a third-rate power'. From the point of view of the magnificence, greatness and usefulness of the empire whose exclusive masters are the white demigods who choose to live in distant regions of the empire, India's position is of great importance (not for honour or equality). In what way, though, does India benefit from her position in the so-called federation of free peoples? She is nothing more than a *dependency* to be exploited by the various parts of the empire, or figuratively, she is the insurance policy of imperialism.

Far from being citizens in a free federation, Indians are not even respected as British subjects in the English colonies, although these colonies recently imported Indian workers to serve the white exploiters. Suffice it to say for the benefit of readers not sufficiently familiar with the constitution of the British Empire that India is neither a colony nor a politically autonomous and financially independent English dominion. It is a dependency subordinate to the English Government in all respects. Indians do not like to emigrate. For half a century, the Indian Government has sent workers to the English colonies under indenture, at the request of the mines and agricultural concerns there.

After having worked for the European settlers, these Indians who have been brought to the colonies against their will, are treated cruelly and not permitted to become citizens. 'They do not have the right to vote although some of them own properties and almost all of them have savings in the banks. Neither are they allowed to bring their wives and children from India'. (A. H. Pritchard, Secretary of the Australia-India Society). Not one Indian is permitted to go to any of the English colonies to work unless recruited under the hated indenture, which is really nothing but legalized slavery.

In order to fully understand the morality of the British Empire in regard to India, it is necessary to say something about the system of indenture which is the only way Indian workers have been sent and are being sent to the English colonies. It will suffice to quote from one of the most prominent and respected nationalist leaders in India:

> This system of indenture has six principal aspects of injustice. The recruits are forced, first of all, to go to a distant and totally unknown country whose language, way of life, customs etc. etc., are entirely foreign to them and where they have no friends, let alone relatives. Secondly, they are forced to work for someone whom they do not know personally, neither he them; thirdly, for the period of the contract, they must live on their master's property which they are not permitted to leave for even a short time and they must stick to the same job arduous though it may be. The fourth point is that they are bound to their master for a predetermined number of years during which they cannot voluntarily break the contract. The fifth point is that they are paid a fixed wage throughout the period of contract, the daily amount of which is far less than that of the free workers together with whom they are employed often in the same jobs. The sixth and worst aspect of the system is that they place themselves under a special law which holds them criminally responsible for violating the least important clauses in the contract. For example, they are liable to be imprisoned and sentenced to hard labour for 'crimes' such as negligence, failure to complete a certain amount of work, for using a disrespectful word or for a rude action which could be interpreted as an insult to the master. (G. K. Gokhale in his speech to the Viceregal Legislative Council, introducing a petition pleading for the abolition of indenture.)

This petition, unanimously supported by the non-official members, was rejected by the official majority who always backed the government. For many years, Indian public opinion has protested against this unjust system. Nevertheless, the government has continued to send thousands of helpless workers to the colonies annually, in order to satisfy the greed of the white colonists, under the hated system of indenture. In 1916 when public protest reached alarming proportions, the government promised to abolish this system, but in the following year it extended the contract it had with Fiji (an English colony in the Pacific) by five years.

The largest number of Indian workers is found in the Union of South Africa. At the present time, some 122,000 British subjects of India live there. They did not go there voluntarily. From 1859, the English landowners and miners in South Africa have brought in Indian workers, with the sanction of the Indian Government. The lack of workers in the African colonies was so great that had the Indians not been sent there, the English enterprises would have failed. One hundred and four thousand Indian workers were sent to South Africa under the system of indenture to work for the English colonists who were subsequently able to found an extensive empire on the Dark Continent. After having worked as slaves for a period of five years or more, those Indian residents of South Africa now find themselves in a pitiful position.

After completing their contract, many Indians found themselves without any means of support or possibility to return home. They were not given work by the English businessmen unless they signed new contracts with stringent stipulations and low wages. Since there was no other way to survive, many Indians returned to slavery. Some of the most courageous began small businesses on their own to escape the oppressive yoke. In this field, too, they came up against the 'justice and correct procedure' of the English. To prevent its slaves from becoming free, the government of South Africa passed a law in 1897 to prohibit the granting of business licences to Indians. Indians who had already established businesses but whose licence could not be renewed were financially ruined. Another, subsequent law decreed that Indians had to pay a yearly tax of thirty pesos upon completion of their period of indenture. Boys over sixteen and girls over thirteen also had to pay this tax, The Immigration Act of 1913 prohibited the entry of any free Indian worker into the Union. In 1907–8 other laws damaging to the Indians were passed, According to these, every Indian, regardless of his social or educational standing, was forced to register at a special police department as if he were a criminal, and to obtain a passport in order to travel in the country. Anyone who failed to comply with this order could be arrested and condemned to six months forced labour or a fine of 1,000 pesos. Hundreds of Indians were imprisoned when they refused to submit to this extreme indignity.

This is the democracy of the British Empire as far as its Indian subjects are concerned. Even under the despotic rule of the Tsar, the Tartars of Central Asia and the Cossacks of the Caucasus were completely free to travel throughout the empire, since they were Russian subjects. The negroes in the United States, great though their humiliation in social life may be, are able to cross the country at will. The Sultan, traditional autocrat as he is, allows his subjects freedom to travel throughout the Turkish Empire. The Armenians, whose oppression by the Ottoman Government is spoken of so frequently, are free to go and live in Arabia if they so wish. In normal times, an Indian could go to Japan or any European country without any restriction whatsoever. However, no Indian is permitted to enter the British colonies without the possession of a passport and without registering in the special section of the police at the port of entry. Even after complying with all these restrictions and demands, his supposed rights as a British subject are not respected by the white colonists. The much-praised liberalism of the so-called free Federation of the British Empire is for the whites alone; it has nothing to do with the Indians or other non-European subjects.

The insult to the Indian subjects in the British colonies has even worse connotations. They are not permitted to own property wherever they wish. They are not even free to live wherever they wish. The government always dictates where the Indians can live, at a distance from the Europeans. Indian businessmen are placed on 'black lists', boycotted and watched so that no European may trade with them. The government consents to all this. In the large cities, Indians are not permitted to walk the footpaths or travel by tram. . . .*

The colonies populated by the English or other Europeans are not dependencies of the empire and, being autonomous, are able to form the British Federation. A frank study of history is sufficient to teach us that English imperial policy has always aimed at exterminating the indigenous race in the conquered territory, as happened in Australia and New Zealand. Where the conquered people are too numerous to be exterminated, English imperial policy chooses to brand them with a perpetual sense of inferiority and to keep them in a state of ignorance, in order to exploit them for the benefit of the white members of the empire. Anyone familiar with the treatment of blacks in England's South-African colonies will clearly see the insincerity and bad faith on which England's mission to civilize the world is based. The Territories Act passed on the eve of this 'Holy War of Liberty' deprived the poor natives of the right to possess or even to lease the smallest block of land of any value either for agriculture or just for subsistence in all parts of the colony. Natives could only possess land rejected as worthless by the foreign intruders.

If the English have no selfish aim in conquering a third of the world and enslaving a fifth of the human race, why do they not allow India to run her own affairs? We have already demonstrated through historical evidence the falsity of the theory that India needed the 'benevolent' rule of England or any other foreign nation. India has sufficient experience of British 'freedom, justice and correct procedure'. India has no illusion of gaining respect and equality among the nations which constitute the British Federation. We insist that a truly free federation can only be formed by autonomous nations which accept and value each other as equals. In order to be a worthy member of any federation of nations, India must first of all free herself; she must regain the independence, prestige and glory which England took away, England, which today with refined cynicism, claims to be the idealistic defender of humanity. . . .*

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* Two more paragraphs on discrimination against the Indians are left out. S.N.R.

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*Two paragraphs are left out here which give additional details of British hypocrisy and broken promises. S.N.R.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Nationalist Movement

As has been previously stated, English businessmen as well as the French conceived the idea of establishing an empire in India when the country was passing through a state of internal disturbances due to the revolution which overthrew the powerful Mohammedan Empire. England did not conquer the Indian Empire through superior military strength, but rather through astute diplomacy along the Machiavellian lines of 'conquer your enemies by dividing them' (divide and rule). The most interesting phenomenon of the English conquest of India is, however, that India never provoked European aggression. Here, as in many other unfortunate Asian and African countries, material greed and thirst for empire were the causes of European conquest. Since India was in a disorganized state at that time, she was unable to grasp the true meaning of Britain's political scheming and oppose the insidious conquest. England was able, because of this, to acquire the vast Indian Empire through the use of Indian military force and Indian finance.

India had been invaded many times in the course of her long history, but her national autonomy had never been threatened before. Pre-British invaders had periodically pillaged the country, or even seized the imperial throne, but they had always allowed the internal administration to remain free. Thus, the politico-economical structure of India had never before suffered unlimited aggression and constant exploitation—characteristics of commercial imperialism in modern Europe.

Indians are traditionally peaceful. In their long history of political power and economic prosperity, they did not once conquer or oppress other nations. The Indo-Aryan temperament is characterized by harmony in personal, social, national and international life. Egotistic patriotism or aggressive nationalism which mark the progress of Western civilization, has never been highly thought of by India. Hindu socio-political organization has never aimed at insatiable expansion at the cost of others. Instead, it has planned and succeeded in establishing an institution to teach the art of social harmony and the science of co-operation among all the members. This organization was not founded so much on rights and prerogatives as on the desire for mutual sacrifice. The Indian did not worry about the form or constitution of his country's government so long as he could continue to advance towards social and intellectual perfection. He did not wish to become a slave to exaggerated necessities; he was content with little and much of his spare time was dedicated to spiritual, intellectual and moral matters. The fertility of the earth and dexterity of the people were able to satisfy all the country's needs, until the greedy Europeans arrived. The English in particular robbed the people of all their wealth, all the products of their daily work and of their soil. British rule has forced India into a situation where the people have to devote all their time and energy to mere subsistence. The proportion of food production for the population has actually increased; nevertheless the people do not have enough to eat although they work all day. Their traditional concept of life, based on spiritualism, has not changed. Unlike their brothers in the West, their idea of necessity was not to become ever more insatiable. The Indians do not expect the rest of the world to serve them. It is their government which has changed. When the latter, obeying its national instinct, brought cruel devastation which threatened to destroy the traditional socio-economic structure of peaceful India, the people found themselves, for the first time in their lives, forced to concentrate all their energy on the political condition of their country.

As soon as the people understood the serious threat presented by the English intruders, they began to concert their efforts to overthrow them. The princes, who had been deceived and dispossessed of their wealth by the English, organized themselves into a military federation: the revolution of 1857 was the result. However, due to the political scheming and economic exploitation of the now well-entrenched aggressors who had greatly demoralized the people, the revolution did not receive sufficient support at the right moment. Moreover, the traditional English imperialist policy of 'divide and rule' was a powerful factor in saving the situation. After crushing the revolution, the English adopted such oppressive, cruel and brutal methods that the people were powerless to reorganize themselves. The English Government took advantage of this period of stagnation to further consolidate their control. The use or possession of firearms was strictly prohibited. In order to break the spirit of the people, national industries were destroyed and wealth appropriated, thus subjecting the population to continuous poverty with the aim of sapping the people's vitality. Above all, they were forcibly kept in a state of ignorance so that ambitious ideas of independence and freedom would not arise.

The spirit of nationalism, although so crushed as to seem quite dead, never completely disappeared. Towards the end of the last century, nationalistic activities re-occurred throughout the country. In spite of the government's repressive measures, these activities grew rapidly. The fact that they were unarmed made it impossible for the people to protest violently or to organize an effective revolution later on. From the beginning, the government fully realized that nothing would stop an eventual uprising in India. It knew that a civilized nation such as India with its great traditions and independence could not remain perpetually under foreign domination. For this reason, England took extreme precautions to avoid the inevitable crisis. Any action which could destroy the people's physical and mental vitality was resorted to. England's economic demands and commercial exploitation have continued to drain the life and blood of the people, throwing them into the clutches of famine and inevitable death. They were deprived of the means to educate themselves since this would have fostered revolutionary ideas, spread through the press which was censored. The one aim of the so-called system of education was to destroy the freedom of thought and intellectual initiative of the middle class, which the British always feared as the future source of any uprising against them. For this reason, the government followed a policy of creating a zone of British influence around India which would prevent the eventual national uprising being secretly supplied with arms from outside. By the end of the last century, India found herself surrounded by an impenetrable circle of weak countries dominated by the English and by seas which flew the Union Jack on the crest of every wave.

The latest phase of Indian nationalism developed in these circumstances. It has been a fifteen year nightmare for the British imperialists during which it has encountered violent opposition even in the countries at present allied with Great Britain.

In spite of constant opposition and persecution by England and her allies, the nationalist movement has progressed rapidly, finally emerging as a large organization having extensive ramifications, which plans revolutionary activities throughout the country. It has sent representatives to all parts of the world. The aim of this revolutionary organization is the unconditional freedom of India. This will be achieved sooner or later and the imperial chain which has choked much of the modern world will be broken. The Indian nationalist movement is of world significance. For this reason, it is justified in seeking the moral and material assistance of all nations and peoples who sincerely believe in the progress of mankind.

In 1899, Lord Curzon, one of the most astute and imperialistic viceroys, went to India. He was of course able to recognize the danger looming in the nationalist movement which was gaining momentum slowly but surely. He was able to foretell the disaster which would befall the British Empire if necessary precautions were not taken immediately. At his suggestion, the English Government began negotiations with Russia on Persia. As everyone already knows, this phase in British diplomacy resulted in the conversion of the Persian Gulf into an English lake, the declaration of a practical protectorate in Southern Persia and, finally, the conclusion of Anglo-Russian entente which contributed directly to the Great European War. The reason for England's policy of aggression in Western Asia was to isolate India from possible contact with any European country which might be opposed to British rule there. It was also aimed at preventing the formation of a league of Asian nations which could put an end to European influence in the Eastern Continent.

Despite his subtlety, Lord Curzon's youthful arrogance, instead of dominating the situation in India, succeeded in annoying even the leaders of the Moderate Party. These men had been working for many years to achieve the constitutional reforms promised by English statesmen since the time of Queen Victoria. Finally, the outrageous partition of the ancient province of Bengal, against unanimous popular opposition, brought the people's indignation to a head. The sinister aim of this partition was to sow the seeds of discord between the Hindus and Mohammedans, granting the latter special favours and privileges. It also created yet another provincial government which would employ hundreds more Englishmen at high salaries. The whole country was filled with enthusiastic patriotism and within a few months all imported goods came to be boycotted. In a very short time the movement had reached such alarming proportions that the government and the English businessmen who are the real rulers of the British Government of India became very worried. *The Englishman*, the official Calcutta newspaper, in an editorial urged the government to take strong measures to suppress nationalistic aspirations once and for all. 'The vital question', it said, 'is what is the government going to do? It must not tolerate this boycott under any circumstances, for it will sever Britain's connection with India by an armed revolution'.

The government began by taking strong action against the popular movement by prosecuting students, who had taken a most active part in supporting the resolution to boycott. Any student who took part in these nationalistic activities was declared a criminal. Hundreds of students were expelled from the schools for refusing to obey this peremptory order. Large groups of young patriots who had been unjustly accused, joined the ranks of the revolutionaries who had already established secret societies throughout the country. Despite strict press censorship, they began to publish secretly hundreds of papers and pamphlets on nationalistic themes, urging the people to rise up against the foreign tyranny.

In 1908 the secret police discovered a bomb factory and an arms arsenal in a Calcutta suburb. Forty-five young members from the upper classes were arrested, some of whom had studied the manufacture of explosives in Europe. They were tried for 'making war against the king'. The prisoners replied in court that 'they did not recognize the English administration as the constitutional government; that the whole nation had decided to put an end to the tyranny of the usurpers; and that the British court could only judge them by brute force'. Among the accused was Sri Arabinda Ghose, the Supreme Commander of the Revolution. However, fearing the tremendous reaction his conviction would have among the people, the government released him. His younger brother, the leader of the arrested group, was condemned to death together with six of his companions. All the other prisoners, with the exception of three, were sent to the penal colony, some for life, others for ten to fifteen years.*

This episode was the first eruption in the latest phase of the Indian nationalist movement. Since then, hundreds of patriots have been sentenced to death and thousands exiled or imprisoned. The government continued to order repressive measures to impede the progress of nationalism. There has never been freedom of the press in British India, but during the last fifteen years the 'press act' has been so restrictive that the mere fact of uttering a patriotic word, or mentioning the names of great revolutionary leaders such as Mazzini, Garibaldi, George Washington, or the leaders of the French Revolution results in long imprisonment with forced labour. Countless publications have been suppressed, their property confiscated and all those connected with them imprisoned. 'The Arms Act' which prohibited the use and possession of fire arms since the 1857 Revolution, has been revised so many times that now even to carry a knife twelve inches long or any ordinary cane in punishable.

Nevertheless, the independence movement continued to grow stronger by gaining more and more followers. The government issued even more repressive decrees so that, on the eve of the European War, practically the whole country was under martial law. Since they lacked sufficient arms or the means of manufacturing them, the revolutionaries organized secret societies scattered throughout the country to make bombs and other explosives with which they conducted a powerful terrorist campaign. This was the only possible way to oppose the government and to fire the people with enthusiasm. During 1908–9 the murder of the most tyrannical officials and the daring act of ransacking the government treasury and the English trading houses reached such dangerous proportions that the 'Laws of Conspiracy and Military Sedition' were passed. Meetings of more than three people on whatever pretext were prohibited, and all clubs and associations formed to give physical, intellectual and spiritual education to the young were banned. The 'Explosives Act' of the same year banned the sale of all chemical products, declaring it criminal and even a capital offence to sell, buy or possess useful articles such as potassium chloride, carbolic acid, nitric acid and similar chemicals. According to this legal trap, it was possible to imprison someone for carrying or possessing an iron hammer, which did happen on many occasions.

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* Arabinda's brother Barindra and his associate Ullaskar Datta were sentenced to death, but the sentence was changed, on appeal, to transportation for life. S.N.R.

The European conflict gave the Indian people an opportunity to rise up against the English tyranny. However, the suspicious vigilance of the British fleet and its allies made it impossible to import sufficient arms and ammunition. Moreover, whilst Great Britain had been the sole enemy of Indian independence before the war, now the entente powers and their allies all opposed the granting of independence to a fifth of the world who dwell in the British Empire of India, and persecuted Indian patriots in all parts of the world under their rule.

There is another section of the Indian nationalist movement. This is the 'Moderate Party'. The leaders of this political group, who are as intensely patriotic as the champions of the armed revolution, believe that English rule is so firmly entrenched that it is impossible to work for total independence. They plan to defeat the British by constitutional reforms, which would give a native majority in the government. This section of the nationalist movement is over thirty years old, but it has achieved absolutely nothing. Like all conquerors, the English rule India for their own benefit, so that if India should gain autonomy Great Britain would be the loser. The first concession demanded by the constitutional nationalists is fiscal autonomy which would give Indians the right to allocate public spending for their own benefit. If England conceded this, there would be no further advantage for her to retain the Indian Empire, since we have shown the extent to which England has benefited and continues to do so from her governance and exploitation of the helpless Indians. The second concession demanded by the 'moderate' leaders is local control of the army which is mainly composed of Indian soldiers and which is maintained by Indian money. They insist that many of the leaders of the army which keeps India in a state of subjugation should be Indians. The British statesmen who formulate imperial policy are not stupid enough to grant this demand, justifiable though it may be. It is clear that India will never rid herself of English domination by the goodwill of the rulers. The only possible way is by bloody revolution, hopeless though this may seem in the present circumstances. To ensure her very existence, India must be free. To continue as part of the British Empire for another fifty years would bring about the loss and death of one of the oldest and noblest branches of humanity.

Some Indian leaders believed that through calling on the goodwill and conscience of England's allies, the oppressed Indians would gain something from this war which, for over four years, has taken so many lives and destroyed so much, all on the pretext of safeguarding the freedom of the world. To date, these patriotic Indians have been persecuted and treated humiliatingly by England's allies although they are pleading for a very natural cause. The humble demands of these Indians in their endeavour to place their country in a position more advantageous than that of a Great Dependency, are little in comparison with the glorious aims which have provided the excuse for the Entente to carry on with worldwide killing.

CHAPTER NINE

The Future

In the preceding chapters we have shown conclusively that the imperialist theory of India being merely a heterogeneous conglomeration of people and not a nation is absolutely false, as is the idea that India must be administered by a 'civilized' foreign nation. We have also proved that the British Empire in India has always had only its own benefit in mind. It is purely and simply a despotic aggression whose only aim is the material expansion of the Empire.

Every nation has its internal, social, industrial and religious problems etc., etc. India is perfectly capable of solving her own problems without the intervention of anyone. However, the greatest problem encountered by national progress is not internal but imposed from outside. This is British rule. The presence of foreign intruders has created an abnormal state of affairs which has impeded national progress. If there is any misunderstanding between the various social classes in India, it has been developed by the British imperialist machiavellian policy of 'divide and rule'. However, the educated of all classes are aware of the sinister cunning of the English bureaucrats. The Hindus and Mohammedans are above all Indians whose enemies are the English. One of the vital principles of British Government policy has been to build mistrust and jealousy between the two large communities. Although this devious policy did achieve some measure of success in the beginning, it has not been effective in recent years. Today, both the Mohammedans and the Hindus realize that Indian freedom and progress dictate, in the first place, the expulsion of the English and the establishment of a national and independent government.

In order to prevent this concentration of national energy, the English Government adopted a policy of duplicity in the final years of the last century. They tried to suppress one group with a rod of iron whilst placating the other and conceding or, rather, promising some reforms. The subtle object of these so-called reforms was to spread discord and jealousy among the members of this second group. For example, in 1908–9, whilst the Indian Government was formulating a series of repressive measures to counter revolutionary movements in various parts of the country, it introduced a plan of reform known as the Morley-Minto Scheme. This plan was intended to alienate the moderates' sympathies for revolutionary activities, promising them constitutional changes in the government. Also, to create jealousy and enmity between the Hindu and Mohammedan leaders of the same Moderate Party, the plan of reform conceded the latter the right to hold a communal election, thus creating a special electorate for the Mohammedans. The press and government propagandists spread the evil doctrine among the uneducated Mohammedans that a representative or national government would be predominantly Hindu in view of the Hindu majority in the population. They said that success for the nationalist movement would be damaging to the Mohammedans. During the past fifteen years, many thoughtless Moslems, inspired by the government, have committed crimes against the peace-loving Hindus. Evidently the aim of such barbaric acts was to create hate and enmity on the part of the Hindus against their Mohammedan compatriots. The government always preferred to employ Moslems when giving jobs to locals. Titles of distinction which effectively serve to deceive members of the rich or official class, were always conferred more on Moslems than Hindus. All this scheming and much more could not, however, achieve the desired end: national unity was not destroyed. It only served to reveal the true aim of the government and strengthened the independence movement.

To express popular sentiments and to demand constitutional concessions, the 'moderate' Hindu and Mohammedan politicians established an organization known as the National Congress of India. It was organized thirty-one years ago as a popular, non-official group with a permanent committee to study conditions of the people and to formulate plans of reforms which are presented to the government in the manner of resolutions passed by annual sessions of the Congress.*

One of the country's most prestigious leaders is elected by popular vote to preside over the annual sessions. All communities take an equal part in the patriotic work of this organization. Eminent Mohammedan leaders have often been elected president. Ten years ago, a separate Muslim League of India was founded to represent the interests of the Moslem community. This organization was established at the instance of the government in order to separate the Hindus and Moslems. During its first years, the League was only concerned with education and representation of the political needs of the Mohammedans. The English bureaucrats tried in every way to incite this separatist movement against the Hindus. The League's leaders soon became aware of the underlying motive for the official protection generously offered to the new organization. An attempt was made to revive the separatist sentiment by granting the Mohammedans the right of 'communal election' through the Morley-Minto Plan. However, the Hindus and Moslems who are, after all, the sons of the soil with the same interests and grievances, refused to be deceived by the common enemy. The two nationalist organizations began to hold meetings in the same towns and at the same time, in order to facilitate complete co-operation. Four years ago one of the most prominent Moslem leaders introduced a resolution to the League, asking it to request the government to revoke the provision of a special Mohammedan electorate. He said that this system was not conducive to the country's common good. Last year, both popular movements passed an identical resolution, demanding autonomy. The following quotation is from a speech given by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, President of the Muslim League, in support of the above mentioned resolution to disprove the theory invented and spread by the English that the Indian Mohammedans and Hindus are not politically united:

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* In 1918, it should be 'thirty-three years ago', since the Congress was founded in 1885. The Muslim League was founded in 1906. S.N.R.

> 'They say we are progressing at a tremendous rate and because we are in the minority, the form of government for which we are asking would be dominated by Hindus. I would like to reply emphatically to this allegation. If we consider the intelligence and history of the Hindu statesmen, we cannot believe that they would take advantage of their larger number to run the national administration. We have absolutely nothing to fear in this respect. It is only a ploy on the part of our common enemy who would go to any lengths to destroy mutual co-operation, which is essential to achievement of national unity. If our country cannot be governed by Hindus, let me say that it cannot be governed by Mohammedans either and even less by the English. It is the Indian people alone who have the supreme right to govern themselves (applause). Administrative authority must be transferred without delay to the people—not Hindus nor Mohammedans'.

Since the movement for autonomy in India made such tremendous progress, the English government sent Edwin Samuel Montagu, Secretary of State for India, to India in August 1917. His mission was to study the conditions and to work out a programme of reforms for the Indian Government. Mr Montagu spent approximately one year in India, conferring with individual Indians chosen by the Viceroy and always in the presence of the latter. The English Parliament strongly opposed Mr Montagu's journey from the beginning. This official who is theoretically responsible for the governing of India finally agreed not to make any promises of reforms whilst he was in the country. Mr Montagu kept his promise, remaining silent during his stay in India. Upon his return to England, the 'Montagu-

Chelmsford Report' was published.* This new document, which is only a report of the investigations undertaken by Montagu with the co-operation of the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, contains a series of insinuations made by the authors against constitutional changes in the Indian Government, and has been discussed extensively in the British and United States press as a reform programme. It has been unanimously criticized by the native Indian press as inadequate and unsatisfactory. On the other hand, the English Press in India has furiously opposed it, declaring it as radical and destined to harm the interests of the empire.

The so-called reforms do not, in fact, attempt to change the composition of the Indian Government since they do not give the Indians any effective power in the administration of the country. There is not a single word in the hundreds of pages of this document referring to the Indian people's natural right to take part in the administration of their own affairs. The 'report' does not outline any plan to combat poverty and ignorance—the two great monuments erected by the English Government in the land of former opulence and learning. It does not give the people the right to make their own laws. One single foreigner, the Viceroy, will continue as before to rule despotically, dictating the laws which must be obeyed by 315,000,000 human beings who are forbidden to protest. There is no mention of the abolition of the repressive decrees which were issued to counter nationalism. There is also no reference to the fact that Indians, as members of the British colonies, have the right to go and work in the colonies. It does not attempt to abolish the special privileges enjoyed by the 'British European subjects' in India—privileges which place a permanent stigma of inferiority on the sons of the soil. It does not plead for the right of the natives to occupy any position of authority in the army or to be given high posts in the public services. It makes no provision whatsoever for the termination of the economic and commercial exploitation of the country for the benefit of other parts of the empire. It does not present any plans for protecting and developing national industry. It does not recommend the lowering of the heavy economic tariffs which have been imposed on the people for so many years and which are continually being raised as a result of the European war. In short, the much discussed 'report' does not even hint at the possibility of autonomy for India. . . .*

India will be free, nevertheless, whether the English like it or not. Peaceful development is impossible for the Indian people. The British

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* Montagu, in fact, came to India in November, 1917 and the Report was published in July, 1918. S.N.R.

* Two pragraphs are left out here. S.N.R.

Empire is the huge obstacle on the road to progress. When the natural development of events is blocked artificially, the latent energy forces itself out and then revolution violently destroys the reactionary forces which threaten the new era.

Although there may be many territorial and political changes due to the European War which has just ended, it is certain that the oppressed Indians will not be free of the most organized and hated power. The British Empire will probably come out of the conflict even stronger, due to the new alliances. No delegate to the peace conferences the resolutions of which will direct the future of the world will speak out in favour of India. Nevertheless, India will be free sooner or later, not through the kindness of the English rulers, but through her own energy. India is destined to play a prominent role in the future of humanity. No one will be able to prevent the successful and dignified carrying out of her duty in time to come. Unfortunately, to achieve this goal, India will have to go against the teachings of the prophets and temporarily the glorious tradition of her history. A war for true liberty will have to be initiated. The aim of this conflict will be the final termination of the arrogant rule of one part of humanity over another; an end to the incredible belief that one part is essentially inferior to the other, which has the right to impose its guidance and rule in the name of civilization. European civilization has proved to be destructive, even to itself. Perhaps this conflict will be even more violent and cruel, but it will not be resolved by promising fake liberty to oppressed peoples while meeting the selfish, political or commercial ambitions of the great powers. It will be achieved by assuring true liberty for the whole world, putting an end to Europe's superiority complex. If only the truly great men whose vision is not blurred by material gains for their nations alone had spoken out and had been sufficiently strong, the useless sacrifice of so many human lives in the last war would have been prevented. If only the world could be truly free, it would avoid another drama of death and destruction.

Hunger and Revolution in India*

The absolute control of the means of communication by Governments of the victorious powers have prevented the general public from knowing anything which might prove disagreeable for those powerful nations which hold undisputed sway over the earth and the millions of human beings that inhabit it.

Because England has captured every route by which news could filter out of India, the world knows only what England wishes of the present condition of the Indian people. As a result of this policy, in force even before the War, there was a prevalent belief among the people of the western hemisphere that the benevolent (?) administration of India by the English had resulted in all the fruits of peace and prosperity for that remote nation. Imperialistic propagandists have been telling the general public for the past 50 years that before the advent of the British the Indian people had never enjoyed these blessings, and that under their amiable protection, 350 million Indians live in contentment and happiness. But the (epoch) has come in which world events move so swiftly that even the stifled voice of India's starving millions reaches the remotest corners of the earth. The barbarous crimes committed by the English in India for more than a century and a half have reached their climax, and even the all-powerful hand of 'perfidious Albion' finds itself unable to keep the world any longer in ignorance of the (crying) reality.

At the present moment, India is stricken by famine such as was never known before, even in her long and (dark) history of famines under British rule. The causes of this terrible epidemic are the economic exhaustion of the people and the exportation of all foodstuffs to feed the allied armies during the four years of the war.

To the mingled cries of the dying masses, the British Government has responded with bombs and bayonet, and passage of even stricter and more repressive laws to prevent the voice of an oppressed people reaching the (outside) world, in its appeal for help. The few notices published in the American and Canadian press testify that conditions in India have acquired alarmingly critical proportions. The whole country is in a state of rebellion, and the British Government is using all of its powers to suppress the uprising of a people that has been crushed beneath a tyranny without precedent in the annals of the civilized world. Early in April, the revolution burst forth spontaneously in the four greatest provinces of the Indian Empire, in Bengal, Bombay, the Punjab and the United Provinces, which together form almost two-thirds of the country. Hundreds of lives have been lost on both sides—that of the Government as well as that of the Revolutionists. The ancient city of Amritsar was one of the places where the fighting first began; it was besieged by British troops which bombarded the entire population from air-planes, killing hundreds of innocent people, and totally destroying the great Temple of God, sacred to the Sikhs and a marvellous architectural monument.

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* From *Gale's*, August 1919, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 9 and 25, published under the heading 'Hunger and Revolution in India by Manabendra Nath Roy, Representative of the Indian Nationalist Party'. *Gale's* was a 32-page monthly magazine which claimed 12,000 circulation in English and 5,000 in Spanish. In my photostat copy of the sets for 1919–20 some words are so faint as to be almost illegible. In the article reproduced here five such words which had to be guessed and constructed from the fading photocopy have been indicated by putting them within parenthesis. However, the question mark (?) against 'benevolent' in the second paragraph was in the original text. I have not altered the phonetic American spellings nor removed the emphasis in italic type which occur in the original. S.N.R.

In all parts of the country English banks were sacked by the revolutionists. The northern part of Calcutta, the first metropolis of India, was in their control for four (days). The principal industrial and commercial cities, such as Bombay, Ahmedabad, Lahore, Delhi, the seat of the Viceroy, Allahabad, Gujranwala, etc., were converted into battle-grounds between the totally disarmed people on one hand, and on the other, the military forces of the government, completely equipped with machine-guns, armoured cars and aeroplanes from which bombs were thrown upon the masses of helpless men, women and children.

All the different elements which form the Indian nation, the Hindus, Sikhs, Mohammedans, and other great communities have united themselves in determined opposition to the British tyranny which has subjected the entire people to a veritable reign of terror with its recent repressive legislation and merciless enforcement of martial law. The repressive measures, known as the Rowlatt Acts, were passed three months ago in face of the unanimous opposition of the Indian people. By these acts, liberty of press, of speech and of platform and meeting are absolutely destroyed. The purpose of the Rowlatt Acts, frankly admitted, is to kill the revolutionary spirit awake in the people. According to the very confession of the British Government, the Indian people are striving for liberty, and the only thing which makes them submit to foreign yoke is the brute force of the oppressors.

For four years India has agonized thru one of the worst famines known in history. Now that the war is over, and everyone seeks to improve the condition of the devastated countries of Europe, conditions in India have become worse. Even the Christian missionaries who constitute the most sworn and vociferous defenders of British Imperialism in India, have united in demanding that the poor infidels must be given food before they can be saved for Christ. A press correspondent of the *Globe*, Toronto, Canada, writes the following:

'India is in the deadly grip of plague and famine. In the Central and Northern provinces, death stalks thru the land, taking a toll that makes the great war casualty list sink into insignificance. To date, the estimated number of dead from plague and famine in THE PAST YEAR is over 32,000,000 people. The poor have eaten all their food and the physical condition of thousands upon thousands is such that they are too weak even to carry their water jars. Some conception of the awful death-toll may be gathered from the following comparison: If coffins for the 30,000,000 British-Indian subjects who have died during the last year thru plague and famine were placed head to feet they would reach a distance equal to one and one-third times around the equator. Words fail to portray the ghastliness of the stupendous tragedy and photographs are too gruesome to publish'.

The *London Times* admits: 'India has been swept bare of food-stuffs to meet the exigencies of the war'. According to government statistics, exports of cereals in 1917–18 rose to 5,400,000 tons valued at $180,000,000. For the same year, wheat to the amount of 1,500,000 tons was exported. In 1919 'India's contribution of food-stuffs was maintained at an even higher level than in 1917–18'. During all of this period the country was ravaged by famine and epidemics incident to famine.

Despite the fact that many notices have found their way into the press of the United States, of famine conditions in India, the people there up to the present moment have contributed very little to alleviate the terrible conditions, brot on by enforced contributions to the 'war of liberty'. In the latter part of May a few Canadian newspapers issued an appeal for funds to succor the dying millions in India, but this appeal was immediately suppressed by order of the Government, which has since allowed no news to be printed about India.

India, the land of proverbial riches and opulence, fell under a curse when the voracious European exploiters came to her coasts in search of gain. Since the days of the East India Company down to the present moment, the Indian people have suffered from chronic famines, malnutrition and endemic diseases which are the inevitable results of such a condition. By nature, education and centuries of culture, the Indians as a race are peaceable, and averse to shedding blood. English capitalists, taking advantage of this well-known characteristic, initiated a kind of exploitation, merciless, cruel and efficient, which is calculated to annihilate the entire Indian people. *A system which succeeds in killing 32,000,000 human beings in a single year, speaks for itself* *without the need of additional damning facts.* The people which rebel against further subjection to such a government should receive at least the moral support of the whole world.

English Imperialism is determined to suppress the just aspirations of the Indian people at whatever cost; without shame or compunction, it is employing all the weapons of modern warfare against a people completely disarmed for 50 years. To maintain the Indian people in their present condition of hopeless slavery is a vital necessity for the future existence of the English capitalistic system; what the capitalists lose in their struggle with the British workers, they will more than recover by their ruthless exploitation of the helpless and miserable Indian laborers. Consequently, notwithstanding the fact that the English proletarian may gain something as a result of the war, he will never be able to overthrow his capitalistic oppressors so long as the workers of India are theirs to exploit at pleasure. Unfortunately, this manifest fact is little considered or recognized by the English Labor Party, which in regard to its own affairs is extremely liberal, but which as regards British Imperialism in India never goes farther than to recommend a more generous policy in the administration of that country. Apparently, the English Labor Party cannot conceive the idea that England has no right whatever, either moral or political, to impose itself upon the Indians, however liberal its rule. Accepting Imperialism as right and necessary for the welfare and greatness of England, they prove themselves just as much Imperialists as their masters. They, and the rest of the world have still to learn that *the struggle for Indian independence is not a local affair, having for its end and purpose the creation of another egoistic nationalism; the liberty of the Indian people is a factor in world politics, for India is the keystone of British Imperialism which constitutes the greatest and most powerful enemy of the Social and Economic Revolution that exists today.* For such time as English capital retains in absolute possession all the immense natural resources of India, with unlimited right to exploit its manpower, just so long will it continue entrenched in its power too firmly to be overthrown by the English proletariat.

And English capital is more than mere English capital—it represents at once the epitome and bulwark of the capitalistic system thruout the world. Seen in this light, it becomes self-evident that the liberation of India is more than a mere act of abstract justice; it signifies a long step towards the redemption of the world from the jaws of the capitalistic system. It is for this reason that no nation, no people or group of people, can afford to remain indifferent to the fate of India, to its cause of liberty, or to the suffering and struggle of those millions of Indians who today plead for the moral and material support of humanity.

SELECTED WORKS
1920

4. An Indian Communist Manifesto
5. Original Draft of the Supplementary Theses on the National and Colonial Question
6. From the *Proceedings of the Second Congress of the Communist International*
   Speeches of Lenin and Roy at the Fifth Session on 26 July evening on the National and Colonial Question
7. Report on the Formation of the Communist Party of India at Tashkent

An Indian Communist Manifesto*

The time has come for the Indian revolutionists to make a statement of their principles in order to interest the European and American proletariat in the struggle of the Indian masses, which is rapidly becoming a fight for economic and social emancipation and the abolition of class rule. The appeal is made to the British proletariat because of their relation to revolutionary movements in countries dominated by British imperialism.

The nationalist movement in India has failed to appeal to the masses, because it strives for a bourgeois democracy and cannot say how the masses will be benefited by independent national existence. The emancipation of the working class lies in the social revolution and the foundation of a communist state. Therefore the growing spirit of rebellion in the masses must be organized on the basis of class struggle in close co-operation with the world proletarian movements.

But, because British domination deprives Indians of the elementary rights indispensable for the organization of such a struggle, the revolutionary movement must emphasize in its programme the political liberation of the country. This does not make its final goal a bourgeois democracy under which the native privileged class would rule and exploit the native workers in place of British bureaucrats and capitalists. All that the world is allowed to know of the Indian revolutionary movement is the agitation for political autonomy. This has naturally failed to enlist the sympathy of the working class in any country, which must always be indifferent to purely nationalist aspirations.

The idea of class-conscious rebellion against capitalistic exploitation has been gaining ground in India, immensely stimulated by the war. The quickened industrial life, the rise in the cost of living, the employment of Indian troops overseas and the echoes of the Russian revolution have fanned the discontent always existing in the masses. The nationalist revolutionary movement, recruited from educated youths of the middle classes, tried to turn the discontent to an armed uprising against foreign rule. Since the beginning of the present century, terrorism, local insurrections, conspiracies and attempts to revolt have become more and more frequent until at last practically the whole country came under martial law. These activities did not inspire the masses with lasting enthusiasm: the leaders failed to prescribe remedies for the social and economic evils from which the workers suffer. But dynamic economic forces, which are destined to cause a proletarian revolt in every country, have grown acute in India and hence the spirit of rebellion has grown more and more manifest among the people who were not moved by the nationalist doctrines preached by the revolutionaries. Today there are two tendencies in the Indian movement, distinct in principles and aims. The nationalists advocate an autonomous India and incite the masses to overthrow the foreign exploiter upon a vague democratic programme or no programme at all. The real revolutionary movement stands for the economic emancipation of the workers and rests on the growing strength of a class-conscious industrial proletariat and landless peasantry. This latter movement is too big for the bourgeois leaders and can only be satisfied with the social revolution. This manifesto is issued for those who fill the ranks of the second movement. We want the world to know that nationalism is confined to the bourgeois, but the masses are awakening to the call of the social revolution.

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* Reproduced from the weekly report of the Director, Central Intelligence, Simla, 2 August 1920 (National Archives of India Home Political Department File 110 of August, 1920). According to the report the Manifesto was published originally in the *Glasgow Socialist*. The report gave a shortened version which is reproduced here since a copy of the *Glasgow Socialist* containing the full text could not be traced. The Manifesto was written by Roy in Berlin before he went to Moscow. S.N.R.

The growth of class-consciousness in the Indian proletariat was unknown to the outer world until last year, when one of the most powerful and best organized strikes in history was declared by the Indian revolutionaries. Though the nationalists used it as a weapon against political oppression, it was really the spontaneous rebellion of the proletariat against unbearable economic exploitation. As the workers of the cotton mills owned by native capitalists were the first to walk out it cannot be maintained that the strike was nothing more than a nationalist demonstration.

It is known in England how this revolt of the famished workers was crushed by British imperialism. But the British working class were misled into believing that it was merely a nationalist demonstration and therefore abstained from taking definite action according to the principles of class solidarity. A simultaneous general strike would have dealt a vital blow to imperialistic capitalism at home and abroad, but the British proletariat failed to rise to the occasion.

The only step taken was weak and of a petty bourgeois nature—the protest against the manner of crushing the revolt signed by Smillie, Williams, Lansbury and Thomas. This was not the voice of the revolutionary proletariat raised to defend class interest.

The bourgeois nationalist movement cannot be significant to the world proletarian struggle or to the British working class, which is learning the worthlessness of mere political independence and sham representative government under capitalism. But the Indian proletarian movement is of vital interest. The tremendous strength which imperialistic capitalism derives from extensive colonial possessions rich in natural resources and cheap human labour must no longer be ignored. So long as India and other subject countries remain helpless victims of capitalist exploitation and the British capitalist is sure of his absolute mastery over millions and millions of human beasts of burden, he will be able to concede the demands of British trade unionists and delay the proletarian revolution which will overthrow him. In order to destroy it completely world capitalism must be attacked simultaneously on every front. The British proletariat cannot march towards final victory unless he takes his comrades in the colonies along with him to fight the common enemy.

The loss of the colonies might alarm orthodox trade union psychology with the threat of unemployment, but a class-conscious revolutionary proletariat, aiming at the total destruction of capitalist ownership and the establishment of a communist state, cannot but welcome such a collapse of the present system since it would lead to the economic bankruptcy of capitalism—a condition necessary for its final overthrow.

To all possible misgivings of British comrades we declare that our aim is to prevent the establishment of a bourgeois nationalist government which would be another bulwark of capitalism. We wish to organize the growing rebelliousness of the Indian masses on the principles of the class struggle, so that when the revolution comes it will be social revolution. The idea of the proletarian revolution distinct from nationalism has come to India and is showing itself in unprecedented strikes. It is primitive and not clearly class-conscious so that it sometimes is the victim of nationalist ideas. But those in the van see the goal of the struggle and reject the idea of uniting the whole country under nationalism for the sole purpose of expelling the foreigner, because they realize that the native princes, landholders, factory owners, moneylenders, who would control the government would not be less oppressive than the foreigner. 'Land to the tiller' will be our most powerful slogan, because India is an agricultural country and the majority of the population belongs to the landless peasantry. Our programme also calls for the organization of the Indian proletariat on the basis of the class struggle for the foundation of a communist state, based during the transition period on the dictatorship of the proletariat.

We call upon the workers of all countries especially Great Britain to help us to realize our programme. The proletarian struggle in India as well as in other dependencies of Great Britain should be considered as vital factors in the international proletarian movement. Self-determination for India merely encourages the idea of bourgeois nationalism. Denounce the masked imperialists who claim it and who disgrace your name (of British workers). The fact that India is ruled by the mightiest imperialism known to history makes any kind of revolutionary organization among the working class almost impossible. The first step towards the social revolution must be to create a situation favourable for organizing the masses for the final struggle. Such a situation can be created only by the overthrow or at least the weakening of the foreign imperialism which maintains itself by military power.

Cease to fall victims to the imperialist cry that the masses of the East are backward races and must go through the hell fires of capitalistic exploitation from which you are struggling to escape. We appeal to you to recognize the Indian revolutionary movement as a vital part of the world proletarian struggle against capitalism. Help us to raise the banner of the social revolution in India and to free ourselves from capitalistic imperialism that we may help you in the final struggle for the realization of the universal communist state.

Manabendra Nath Roy
Abani Mukherji
Santi Devi

Original Draft of Supplementary Theses on the National and Colonial Question*

1. To determine the relation of the Communist International to the revolutionary movements in the countries dominated by capitalistic imperialism is one of the most important questions before the Second Congress of the Third International. The history of the world revolution has come to a period when a proper understanding of this relation is indispensable; the great European war and its results have shown clearly that the masses of the non-European subjected countries are inseparably connected with the proletarian movement in Europe, as a consequence of the centralized world capitalism.

2. The fountainhead from which European capitalism draws its main strength is no longer to be found in the industrial countries of Europe, but in the colonial possessions and dependencies. Without the control of the extensive markets and vast fields of exploitation in the colonies, the capitalist powers of Europe cannot maintain their existence even for a short time. England, the stronghold of imperialism, has been suffering from overproduction since more than a century ago. But for the extensive colonial possessions acquired for selling her surplus products and as a source of raw materials for her ever growing industries, the capitalist structure of England would have crushed under its own weight long ago. By enslaving the hundreds of millions of inhabitants of Asia and Africa, English imperialism succeeded so far in keeping the British proletariat under the domination of the bourgeoisie.

3. Superprofit gained in the colonies is the mainstay of modern capitalism and so long as it is not deprived of this source of superprofit, it will not be easy for the European working class to overthrow the capitalist order. Thanks to the possibility of intensive and extensive exploitation of human labour and natural resources in the colonies, the capitalist nations of Europe are trying, not without

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* Both Roy's Supplementary Theses and Lenin's Theses on the National and Colonial Question were adopted by the Second Congress of the Comintern (1920) after important revisions. Roy's original draft is reproduced here. A Russian version was published in the Stenographic Report of the Second Comintern Congress (Vtoroi Kongress Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala, Moscow, 1921, pp. 122–6). S.N.R.

success, to recuperate their present bankruptcy. By exploiting the masses in the colonies, European imperialism will be in a position to give concession after concession to the proletariat at home. It will not hesitate to go to the extent of sacrificing the entire surplus value in the home country so long as it continues in the position to gain its huge superprofits in the colonies.

4. Without the breaking up of the colonial empire, the overthrow of the capitalist system in Europe does not appear possible. Consequently, the Communist International must widen the sphere of its activities. It must establish relations with those revolutionary forces that are working for the overthrow of imperialism in the countries subjected politically and economically.

5. Such relation of the Communist International with the revolutionary movement in the subject countries is not tantamount to the former's upholding the doctrine of nationalism. The Communist International is the concentrated will of the world revolutionary proletariat. Its mission is to organize the working class of the whole world for the overthrow of the capitalist order and the establishment of communism. The Third International is a fighting body which has outgrown the realm of pure doctrinairism.

Dominated as it was by a group of politicians, permeated with bourgeois culture, the Second International failed to appreciate the importance of the colonial question. For them the world did not exist outside of Europe.

They could not see the necessity of co-ordinating the revolutionary movement in Europe with those in the non-European countries. Instead of giving moral and material help to the revolutionary movements in the colonies, the members of the Second International themselves became imperialists.

6. Foreign imperialism imposed on the eastern peoples prevented them from developing socially and economically side by side with their fellows in Europe and America. Owing to the imperialistic policy of preventing industrial development of the colonies, a proletarian class in the strict sense of the term could not come into existence until recently. The indigenous craft industries were destroyed to make room for the products of the centralized industries in the imperialistic countries; consequently a big majority of the population was driven to the land to produce foodgrains and raw materials for export to foreign lands. On the other hand, there followed a rapid concentration of land, the proprietary right of which was vested in the state thus creating a huge landless peasantry. The great bulk of the population was kept in a state of illiteracy. As a result of this policy, the spirit of revolt latent in every subject people found its expression only through the small, educated middle class.

The foreign domination has obstructed the free development of the social forces—therefore its overthrow is the first step towards the revolution in the colonies. So, to help overthrow the foreign rule in the colonies is not to endorse the nationalist aspirations of the native bourgeoisie but to open up the way to the smothered proletariat there.

7. The revolutionary movements in the colonies are essentially an economic struggle. The bourgeois democratic nationalist movements are limited to the small middle class, which does not reflect the aspirations of the masses. Without the active support of the masses, the national freedom of the colonies will never be attained. But in many countries, especially in India, the masses are not with the bourgeois nationalist leaders—they are moving towards revolution independently of the bourgeois nationalist movement. There are to be found in the dependent countries two distinct movements which every day grow farther and farther apart from each other. One is the bourgeois democratic nationalist movement, with a programme of political independence and the other is the mass action of the ignorant and poor peasants and workers. The former endeavour to control the latter and often succeed to a certain extent, but it would be a mistake to assume that the bourgeois nationalist movement expresses the sentiments and aspirations of the general population. For the overthrow of foreign imperialism, the first step towards revolution in the colonies, the cooperation of the bourgeois nationalist elements may be useful. But the Communist International must not find in them the media through which the revolutionary movement in the colonies should be helped. The mass movements in the colonies are growing independently of the nationalist movements. The masses distrust the political leaders who always lead them astray and prevent them from revolutionary action.

8. The real strength of the liberation movement in the colonies is no longer confined to the narrow circle of bourgeois democratic nationalists. In most of the colonies there already exist organized socialist or communist parties, in close relation to the mass movement. The relation of the Communist International with the revolutionary movement in the colonies should be through the medium of these parties or groups, because they are the vanguard of the working class in their respective countries. They may not be very big today, but they reflect the desire of the masses and the masses will follow them to the revolution. The communist parties of the different imperialistic countries must work in conjunction with these proletarian parties of the colonies and through them, give all the moral and material support to the revolutionary movements in general.

9. The supposition that, owing to the economic and industrial

backwardness, the peoples in the colonies are bound to go through the stage of bourgeois democracy is wrong. The events and conditions in many of the colonies do not corroborate such a supposition. It is true that the revolution in the colonies is not going to be a communist revolution in its first stages. But if from the beginning, the lead of the revolution is in the hands of a communist vanguard, the revolutionary masses would not be led astray but would go straight ahead through the successive periods of development of revolutionary experience. Indeed, it would be very difficult in many of the oriental countries to solve the agrarian problem along pure communist principles. In its first stages, the revolution in the colonies must be carried on with a programme in which will be included many petty bourgeois reform clauses—for instance, division of land, etc. But from this it does not necessarily follow that the leadership of the revolution will have to be surrendered to the bourgeois democrats.

10. The bourgeois national democrats in the colonies strive for the establishment of a free national state, whereas the masses of workers and poor peasants are revolting, even though in many cases unconsciously, against the system which permits such brutal exploitation. Consequently, in the colonies, we have two contradictory forces; they cannot develop together, To support the colonial bourgeois democratic movements would amount to helping the growth of the national spirit which will surely obstruct the awakening of class-consciousness in the masses; whereas to encourage and support the revolutionary mass action through the medium of a communist party of the proletarians will bring the real revolutionary forces to action which will not only overthrow the foreign imperialism, but lead progressively to the development of Soviet power, thus preventing the rise of a native capitalism in place of the vanquished foreign capitalism, to further oppress and exploit the people.

11. To initiate at as early a stage as possible the class struggle in the colonies means to awaken the people to the danger of a transplanted European capitalism which, overthrown in Europe, may seek refuge in Asia, and to defeat such an eventuality before its beginning.

From the Proceedings of the Second Congress of the Communist International

Editor's Note

For the details of the Second Congress there are many primary sources, some published contemporaneously, some slightly later, some subsequently edited. There are also recollections of some of the participants. The following are some of the very major sources:

1. *Der Zweite Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale: Protokoll,* Hamburg, 1921.
2. *Berichte Zum Zweiten Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale,* Hamburg, 1921.
3. *Leitsatze Zum II Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale,* Petrograd, 1920.
4. II-e Congrès de la III-e Internationale Communiste, Compte-rendu stenographique, Petrograd, n.d. (? 1920/1921).
5. *Vtoroi Kongress Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala,* stenograficheskii otchet, Moscow, 1921.
6. *Vtoroi Kongress Kominterna: Protokoly Kongressov Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala,* Moscow, 1934.
7. *The Second Congress of the Communist International Proceedings of Petrograd Session of 17th July and of Moscow Sessions of 19th July–7th August 1920,* Published by the Publishing Office of the Communist International, America, 1921.
8. *The Second Congress of the Communist International as Reported by the Official Newspapers of Soviet Russia,* Washington, 1920.
9. *Theses and Statutes of the Third (Communist) International,* Moscow, 1920.

We reproduce in the following pages segments of the proceedings of the fifth session on 26 July. Relevant portions of Lenin's speech and Roy's speech introducing his Supplementary Theses as amended, are given here. They constitute pages 111 to 123 of No. 7 in the above list. The debate was continued at the Sixth session on 28 July and both sets of theses, as amended, were adopted. Among speakers on the theses were: Zinoviev, Lenin, Maring, Roy, Reed, Fraina, Radek, Serrati, Sultan Zade, Graziadei, Laou Siou Tchao, Pak, Pasha, Frumkina, Murphy, Wynkop, Merejin, Cohn and comrades "X" and "Y" (from Ireland). S.N.R.

Fifth Session

26 July (Evening)

ZINOVIEV—I declare the session open.

I request all the delegates to hand in their written reports about their respective parties as soon as possible. We have received uptil now only three reports, and we ask you to hand in the rest of the material within the next two or three days. Various committees have been working but they are not through yet. The Commission on the National and Colonial Questions has carried its work furthest, and is in a position to bring in its report. We, therefore, propose that the Congress take up the National and Colonial Question for discussion today. Is there any objection? As there seems to be none, I propose that we pass on to the discussion of the National Question. Comrade Lenin has the floor.

LENIN—Comrades, I shall limit myself to a few short introductory remarks and then yield the floor to Comrade Maring, the secretary of our Committee, who is to report in detail upon the amendments to the theses adopted by the Committee. Then Comrade Roy will present his supplementary motions. Our Committee has reported (*sic*) the former and the latter by unanimous vote. As you will see from the theses, we have reached unanimous conclusions on the most important questions, and I shall therefore be rather brief.

What is the essence, the main idea of our resolution?

The fundamental difference between the policy of the Second International and that of the Third International is that the latter takes up the question of the liberation not only of the colonies but also of the small nations, which are financially, economically or politically oppressed by the great capitalist powers. The essential nature of imperialism consists in the division of the entire world into a large number of oppressed nations and a very insignificant number of oppressing nations, which are enormously rich and powerful from a militarist point of view. The enormous mass of the population of the earth, more than a billion, probably a billion and a quarter, forming 76 per cent of the population of the earth—taking the population of the earth to be one and three quarter billions—belong to the oppressed nations. These belong either to dependent colonies or to semi-colonial countries such as Persia, Turkey, and China, or to the countries which have been defeated by the great imperialist hosts and are now in a condition of complete dependence. This idea of the division of nations into oppressors and oppressed is incorporated in all the theses, not only in those signed by myself and published previously, but also in those of Comrade Roy. The latter have been written from the standpoint of India and the great Asiatic nationalities, and are therefore of special importance for us. The second important point in our theses is that the present world situation and the relations between nations following the Imperialist War is (*sic*) based upon a struggle between a small number of Imperialist nations and those powers where there is a Soviet movement, or where the power of the Imperialists has been overthrown by the Soviet power. Only when we regard the question from this angle can we understand the colonial and national problems in the remotest parts of the world. Only from this point of view can the Communist Parties of the civilized as well as of the backward countries correctly put and properly answer these political questions.

Next I wish to lay special stress on the question of the bourgeois democratic movement in the backward countries. This matter was the subject of some controversy. We fought over the question as to whether it is proper theoretically and on principle to declare that the Communist International and the Communist Parties are bound to support the bourgeois democratic movements in the backward countries. The result of the discussion was that we came to the unanimous conclusion that we should not deal with bourgeois democratic movements but with revolutionary nationalist movements. There is no doubt that every nationalist movement can be only a bourgeois democratic movement, for the great mass in the backward countries consists of peasants, who are the representatives of small capitalist relations. It would be utopian to suppose that proletarian parties—as far as there is a chance of forming such—are in a position to carry on Communist activity and Communist politics without getting into definite relations with the peasants of the backward countries and without their support. The objection was raised that in using the phrase bourgeois democratic movement we lose sense of the difference between the reformist and the revolutionary movements which have of late sprung up in the backward countries and in the colonies. The Imperialist bourgeoisie has done everything in its power to create a reformist movement. An understanding has been reached between the bourgeoisie of the exploiting countries and that of the colonial countries, so that most often the bourgeoisie of the oppressed countries, though supporting the national movement, nevertheless works together with the Imperialist bourgeoisie against all revolutionary movements. This has been clearly proven, and in order to take note of this difference the words 'bourgeois democratic' should be replaced by the term 'nationalist revolutionary'. The idea is that we, as Communists, should support the bourgeois movements for liberation in the colonies only in cases when these movements are really revolutionary, when they are not opposed to our enlightening and organizing the peasantry and the great masses of the exploited for revolutionary purposes. When this is impossible the Communists are obliged to fight against the reformist bourgeoisie in those countries, as well as against the heroes of the Second International. There are already such parties in the colonial countries; they naturally represent the reformist bourgeoisie, although they call themselves Social Democratic or Socialist. This distinction has been emphasized in all the theses, and I believe our point of view gets thereby a more precise formulation. . . .

. . . We must base the Revolution of the Communist International on the assumption that the peasant soviets, the soviets of the exploited, are applicable not only to capitalist countries, but can be adapted also to pre-capitalist conditions, and that it is the absolute duty of the Communists and of those who are ready to organize Communist parties to propagate the idea of peasant soviets and of soviets of the exploited everywhere, including the backward and colonial countries, and to make the attempt, wherever conditions permit, to create peasant soviets or soviets of the labouring people. . . .

. . . There is no doubt that when the victorious proletarian Soviet Republics will lend a helping hand to these masses, the development of the backward countries will pass out of its present stage. This question aroused quite a lively discussion in the Committee, not only in connection with the theses advanced by myself, but much more in connection with those of Comrade Roy, which he is going to advocate here, after some changes have been agreed upon. The question was whether it is correct to assume that the development of capitalist economy is inevitable in those backward countries which are now liberating themselves, and in which progressive movements have been started since the war; and we came to the conclusion that it is not inevitable, and that when the victorious revolutionary proletariat will carry on a systematic propaganda and the Soviet governments will assist with all the means at their disposal, then it is incorrect to assume that the capitalist stage is unavoidable for those nations. Not only must we form independent nuclei of party organizations, not only must we proceed at once to propagate the idea of peasant soviets and to adapt these soviets to pre-capitalist conditions, but the Communist International must declare on theoretical grounds that with the assistance of the proletariat of the advanced countries the backward nations can arrive to the Soviet form of organization and through certain stages pass on to Communism, obviating the capitalist stage. It is impossible to indicate beforehand the means to be used for that purpose; practical experience will show the way, but it is firmly established that all working masses, including those of the remotest nationalities, are susceptible to the Soviet idea, and that these Soviet organizations must be adapted to pre-capitalist relationships, and that the work of the Communist Parties all over the world must start at once in this direction. . . .

ZINOVIEV—The floor is granted to Comrade Maring, secretary of the Commission.

MARING—Comrades, the Commission has studied Comrade Lenin's theses, as well as the supplementary theses of Comrade Roy. . . .

Comrade Roy's theses were thoroughly discussed by the Commission, and passed in the form in which Comrade Roy is going to read them to the Congress. I think that it is possible now to introduce all these alterations into the text of the theses.

ROY—Comrades, as a representative of British India I have submitted to the Congress and to the Commission certain supplementary theses which should be made public here, in view of the fact that they have not been published. I will now read them.

SUPPLEMENTARY THESES ON THE NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTIONS

(1) To determine more especially the relation of the Communist International to the revolutionary movements of the countries dominated by capitalistic imperialism; for instance, India and China, etc., is one of the most important questions before the Second Congress of the Third International. The history of the World Revolution has come to a point when a proper understanding of this relation is indispensable. The great European War and its results have shown clearly that the masses of non-European subjected countries are inseparably connected with the proletarian movement in Europe, as a consequence of centralized World Capitalism (for instance, the sending of colonial troops and huge armies of workers to the battle fronts during the war, etc.).

(2) One of the main sources from which European Capitalism draws its chief strength is to be found in the colonial possessions and dependencies.

Without the control of the extensive markets and vast fields of exploitation in the colonies, the capitalist powers of Europe cannot maintain their existence even for a short time. England, the stronghold of imperialism, has been suffering from over-production since more than a century ago. But for the extensive colonial possessions acquired for the sale of her surplus products and a source of raw materials for her ever growing industries, the capitalist structure of England would have crushed under its own weight long ago. By enslaving the hundreds of millions of inhabitants of Asia and Africa, English Imperialism succeeds so far in keeping the British proletariat under the domination of the bourgeoisie.

(3) Superprofit gained in the colonies is the mainstay of modern capitalism, and so long as the latter is not deprived of this source of superprofit, it will not be easy for the European working class to overthrow the capitalist order. Thanks to the possibility of the extensive and intensive exploitation of the human labour and natural resources in the colonies, the capitalist nations of Europe are trying, not without success, to recuperate from their present bankruptcy. By exploiting the masses in the colonies, European Imperialism will be in a position to give concession after concession to the labour aristocracy at home. Whilst, on the one hand, European Imperialism seeks to lower the standard of living of the home proletariat by bringing into competition the productions of the lower paid workers in subjected countries, on the other hand it will not hesitate to go to the extent of sacrificing the entire surplus value in the home country, so long as it continues to gain its huge superprofits in the colonies.

(4) The breaking up of the colonial empire, together with the proletarian revolution in the home country, will overthrow the capitalist system in Europe. Consequently, the Communist International must widen the sphere of its activity. It must establish relations with those revolutionary forces that are working for the overthrow of imperialism in the countries subjected politically and economically. These two forces must be co-ordinated if the final success of the World Revolution is to be guaranteed.

(5) The Communist International is the concentrated will of the World revolutionary proletariat. Its mission is to organize the working class of the whole world for the overthrow of the capitalistic order and the establishment of Communism. The Third International is a fighting body which must assume the task of combining the revolutionary forces of all the countries of the world.

Dominated as it was by a group of politicians, permeated with bourgeois culture, the Second International failed to appreciate the importance of the colonial question. For them the world did not exist outside of Europe. They could not see the necessity of co-ordinating the revolutionary movements in Europe with those in the non-European countries. Instead of giving moral and material help to the revolutionary movements in the colonies, the members of the Second International themselves became imperialists.

(6) Foreign imperialism, imposed on the Eastern peoples, prevented them from developing socially and economically side by side with their fellows in Europe and America. Owing to the imperialist policy of preventing industrial development in the colonies, a proletarian class, in the strict sense of the word, could not come into existence

there until recently. The ingenious* craft industries were destroyed to make room for the products of the centralized industries in the imperialistic countries—consequently the majority of the population was driven to the land to produce cereals, fodder, and raw materials for export to foreign lands. On the other hand, there followed a rapid concentration of land in the hands of big landowners, of financial capitalists and the State, thus creating a huge landless peasantry. The great bulk of the population was kept in a state of illiteracy. As the result of this policy the spirit of revolt, latent in every subject people, found its expression only through the small educated middle class.

Foreign domination has obstructed the free development of the social forces; therefore its overthrow is the first step towards a revolution in the colonies. So to help overthrow the foreign rule in the colonies is not to endorse the nationalist aspirations of the native bourgeoisie, but to open the way to the smothered proletariat there.

(7) There are to be found in the dependent countries two distinct movements, which every day grow farther apart from each other. One is the bourgeois democratic national movement, with the programme of political independence under the bourgeois order, and the other is the mass action of the ignorant and poor peasants and workers for their liberation from all sorts of exploitation. The former endeavour to control the latter, and often succeed to a certain extent, but the Communist International and the parties affected must struggle against such control and help to develop class consciousness in the working masses of the colonies. For the overthrow of foreign capitalism, the first step towards revolution in the colonies, the cooperation of the bourgeois nationalist revolutionary elements is useful.

But the foremost and necessary task is the formation of Communist Parties which will organize the peasants and workers and lead them to the Revolution and to the establishment of Soviet Republics. Thus the masses of the backward countries may reach Communism, not through capitalistic development but led by the class-conscious proletariat of the advanced capitalist countries.

(8) The real strength of the liberation movement in the colonies is no longer confined to the narrow circle of the bourgeois democratic nationalists. In most of the colonies there already exist organized revolutionary parties which strive to be in close relation with the working masses. The relation of the Communist International with the revolutionary movement in the colonies should be realized through the medium of these parties or groups, because they are the vanguard of the working class in their respective countries. They are not very large today, but they reflect the aspirations of the masses, and the

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* *sic*; in the typed original text signed by Roy the word was indigenous. S.N.R.

latter will follow them to the Revolution. The Communist Parties of the different imperialist countries must work in conjunction with these proletarian parties of the colonies, and through them give moral and material support to the revolutionary movements in general.

(9) The Revolution in the colonies is not going to be a Communist Revolution in its first stages. But if from the outset the leadership is in the hands of a Communist vanguard, the revolutionary masses will not be led astray, but go ahead through the successive periods of development of revolutionary experience. Indeed it would be extremely erroneous in many of the Oriental countries to try to solve the agrarian problem according to pure Communist principles. In its first stages the Revolution in the colonies must be carried on with a programme which will include many petty bourgeois reform clauses, such as division of land, etc. But from this it does not follow at all that the leadership of the Revolution will have to be surrendered to the bourgeois democrats. On the contrary, the proletarian parties must carry on vigorous and systematic propaganda of the Soviet idea, and organize peasants' and workers' Soviets as soon as possible. These Soviets will work in co-operation with the Soviet Republics in the advanced capitalistic countries for the ultimate overthrow of the capitalist order throughout the world.

Certain of the alterations which the Commission has made in my theses have been accepted by me. I draw the special attention of the Congress to these most important questions. I am most pleased that I have the opportunity for the first time to take part in the serious discussion of the Colonial Question at the Congress of the revolutionary proletariat. Until the present time the European parties did not pay sufficient attention to this question; they were too busy with their own affairs, and ignored the Colonial Question. At the same time these questions are of great importance for the international movement. England is at the present moment the most powerful imperialist state, the chief reason being its vast colonial possessions. It has acquired great importance, power, and a firm social position. All this should be looked upon as the result of its colonial possessions. And although the same cannot be said of Germany, in view of the fact that this country is at the present time deprived of its colonies, the question of colonies is nevertheless of significance not only for England. It is necessary that the German comrades should devote their attention to this question, for it has acquired an international significance. The economic interrelation between Europe and the colonies is at the present time the foundation of the entire system of capitalism. Surplus value, which was in the past produced in England, is at the present time partly produced in the colonies. Furthermore, additional products which are manufactured in England itself are exported to the colonies. In this way England has organized her production in such a manner that articles of primary necessity are manufactured by her during the space of three months annually. England has at all times exploited its workers in the most brutal manner. The same system of expropriation, the impoverishment and oppression of human personality in the labourer is applied by that country to all subjected nationalities. British India alone possesses a population of not less than three hundred and fifteen millions. Along with British India, England exploits also several million coloured people in the colonies. Since the Communist International has decided to take up this question, the next step is to find the best way of furthering the development of the colonial movement. Until lately there were in the colonies only bourgeois national revolutionary movements, whose only aim has been to replace the foreign exploiters in order to be able to do the exploitating themselves.

During the war and immediately after it great changes have taken place in India. While formerly English capitalism had always hindered the development of Indian industry, of late it has changed that policy. The growth of industry in British India has gone on at such a pace as can hardly be imagined here in Europe. Taking into consideration that during recent times the industrial proletariat of British India has increased by 15 per cent, and that the capital employed in British Indian industry has risen 2,000 per cent, one gets an idea of the rapid development of the capitalist system in British India. The same also applies to Egypt, the Dutch Indies, and China.

At the same time a new movement among the exploited masses has started in India, which has spread rapidly and found expression in a gigantic strike movement. This mass movement is not controlled by the revolutionary nationalists, but is developing independently, in spite of the fact that the nationalists are endeavouring to make use of it for their own purposes. This movement of the masses is of a revolutionary character, although it cannot be said that the workers and peasants constituting it are class-conscious. But they are nevertheless revolutionary. This is evident by their daily activity. This stage of the revolutionary movement of the masses opens a new field of activity for the Communist International, and it is only a question of finding the proper methods for gathering the fruits of that activity. Naturally a revolution started by the masses in that stage will not be a Communist revolution, for revolutionary nationalism will be in the foreground. But at any rate this revolutionary nationalism is going to lead to the downfall of European Imperialism, which would be of enormous significance for the European proletariat. I conclude my speech with an urgent appeal to the delegates of the Congress in no wise to reject that support which the colonial peoples are now offering the revolutionary proletariat.

Formation of the Communist Party of India at Tashkent*

Minutes of the Meeting held at Tashkent on 17.10.1920.

The Communist Party of India founded at Tashkent on 17 October 1920 consists of the following members:

(1) M. N. Roy, (2) Evelyn Trent-Roy, (3) A. N. Mukherji, (4) Rosa Fitingov, (5) Mohd. Ali (Ahmed Hasan), (6) Mohd. Shafiq Siddiqi, (7) Acharya (M. Prativadi Bhayankar).

It adopted a resolution establishing the condition of 3 months' probation period (as candidate member) for those persons who wished to join the party

Comrade Shafiq is elected as secretary.

The Indian Communist Party adopts principles proclaimed by the Third International and undertakes to work out a programme suited to the conditions in India.

Seal

Chairman: M. ACHARYA
Secretary: ROY

No. 638
TURKESTAN BUREAU

20XII 1920
Tashkent

To: The Central Committee of the
Communist Party of Turkestan

It is hereby testified that the Communist Party of India has been organised here in accordance with the principles of the Third International. The Indian Communist Party is working under the political guidance of the Turkestan Bureau of the Comintern.

Seal

Secretary in-charge
(Turkestan Bureau)
ROY

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* Almost immediately after the Second Congress of the Comintern a Provisional All-India Central Revolutionary Committee was formed in Moscow with Roy elected as its Chairman. He was sent to Tashkent where he formed the Communist Party of India on 17 October. The documents reproduced here were found in the Communist Party Archives of the Uzbek Republic and published in both Muzafar Ahmad's *Myself and the CPI*, and G. Adhikari, *Documents of the History of the CPI*. By the end of 1920 there were altogether 13 members. S.N.R.

SELECTED WORKS

1922

8. India in Transition
9. Selections from *The Vanguard of Indian Independence*
10. Selections from *The Advance-Guard*
11. *What Do We Want*
12. India's Problem and Its Solution

INDIA IN TRANSITION

By

MANABENDRA NATH ROY

With Collaboration
of Abani Mukherji

Genève

Edition de la Librarie J. B. Target
1922

Editor's Note

The present reprint strictly follows the 1922 Berlin edition and retains its spellings, punctuation marks and use of definite and indefinite articles even where they do not quite agree with currently accepted norms.

Except where they carry the editor's initials, footnotes are by the author and belong to the 1922 edition. S.N.R.

Introduction

It is recognized by all that India is in a state of transition. She finds herself in the period which links the past lived through and left behind, with the dawning future of new activities, new hopes and new aspirations. Indians of all shades of political opinion and social tendencies have written and are writing about this stage of transition. Everybody has defined it according to his understanding or his desire. Even writers belonging to the imperialist camp have dealt with the question. They have done it of course from the imperialist point of view. All hold that a 'New India',—'Young India' is in the process of birth. Various theories about the character of this rising Indian nation are formulated. Multifarious plans and schemes regarding the education of this coming child are discussed. The British ruling class is anxious to be the godfather of this child and has appointed the clever midwife of imperial Liberalism to help its birth. And at the same time all precautions are being taken in order to prevent this belated child growing too fast and eventually revolting against the hegemony of paternal protection. The politically minded Indians—economically most advanced, therefore, the most conscious vanguard of the rising nation—find this transition leading up to their aggrandizement, which they identify with an imaginary prosperity of the inhabitants of a politically autonomous India. They propose that the people of India should be guided by them step by step along an orderly and constitutional channel, through this period of transition. There is a third school which also takes notice and talks about this transition. They are the extreme nationalists who have been dominating the stage for the last several years. Their socio-political philosophy is the hardest to comprehend, being hopelessly confused. The reason for this confusion is that they hold an entirely wrong conception of this transition, in spite of being the most rudely tossed and toppled by this great wave of popular upheaval. To them it is not so much a transition, but a revivalist period, through which India is passing. Because they think that the Indian people are struggling to liberate themselves from the political and economic bondage which obstructed their progress for centuries, not to begin a new life with a new vision, but to revive the old. But the past is doomed by history, one of whose most important chapters is the present transition.

All these diverse definitions and interpretations, nevertheless, do not alter the fact that India is changing and changing fast. Her people are out, consciously or unconsciously, to change their life. This is the fundamental phenomenon in all that is happening in India today. Neither the anxiety of the British Imperialists, nor the desire of the constitutional patriots, nor the fanaticism of the orthodox nationalists will be able to lead the rising Indian nation astray from the path marked out by those historical forces which determine human progress. Jointly or severally they may retard, confuse the forward march of the Indian people; but they cannot stop it forever. The real significance of the period of transition through which India is passing, is that after long and long years of forced stagnation, the progressive forces latent in the Indian society are asserting themselves. The future of the Indian nation is going to be shaped by the inexorable evolution of these forces.

The following chapters are written with a view to analyse the present situation and the prospective developments. In this analysis nothing has been taken for granted; realities, cold facts, have been examined in order to determine which way the wind is blowing. An attempt has been made to investigate the past, analyse the present and visualize the future, from the point of view of Historic[al] Materialism. To rewrite Indian history is a tremendous, although much-needed task. No such pretension entered into the writing of these pages. They are written with an eye to problems much more immediate. The object of this work is first, to point out the material forces that are pushing the various classes of the Indian people in the present struggle; second, to point out the deep-rooted social character of the present unrest; third, to analyse the social tendencies embodied by the two principal schools of nationalism; and fourth, to indicate the revolutionary trend of the growing mass movement and to impress upon those concerned the necessity of conforming their programme and tactics according to it.

The materials necessary for realizing the above-stated objects satisfactorily are not easily available. We are obliged to learn about the past of the Indian people from two sources viz., 1. the imperialist historians, who write more about the civilizing mission of their illustrious countrymen than about the life and conditions of the conquered people; and 2. Indian authors, who are very apt to sacrifice historical facts on the altar of patriotism. At best we can have some idea of the glories and grandeur of the Hindu and Moslem courts. Thanks to the painstaking researches of some modern historians, one can learn how many sacks of kishmish the great Aurangzeb consumed in his life or how the noble Shirajadawlla has been painted in such a black colour by the English writers; but a scrutinizing study of such impressive volumes provides one with but little information as to the economic condition of the toiling masses. Nevertheless, the searchlight of Historic[al] Materialism reveals to us many things even in the dark depths of such historical treatises. Thus we have succeeded in establishing a rational background of history upon which the picture of contemporary India can be drawn in none too blurred and irregular lines.

One has to be disappointed if he expects anything better from the records of the British government. After racking the brain over the mountains of Statistical Reports published by the government one wonders whether it is really true that the English are ruling India out of charity. Our object not being limited to the overdone task of pointing out the heavy Home Charges and other forms of drains from India, we had to read the same statistics in various ways in order to find out the fullest extent of exploitation to which the Indian masses are subjected not only by the foreign rulers, but by the native propertied class as well.

With the help of the materials available, the real character of the transition through which the Indian society is passing, has been shown in the first three chapters. Taking this analysis of the economic development of one section of the population and the corresponding exploitation of the rest, the future life and struggle of the rising Indian nation are to be judged. Neither a 'New India' nor a 'Young India' is going to be born from this transition, which will simply result in ushering the people of India into a more advanced stage of socio-economic development. India is not only struggling to free herself from the political domination of a foreign power, but she is moving ahead in the path of human progress and in doing so finds many cherished traditions of old prejudicial to this movement forward. Therefore her entire store of popular energy is in a state of revolt against everything which has so far kept her backward and still conspires to do so. This revolt, this great social upheaval, is the essence of the present transition, which marks the disappearance of the old, bankrupt socio-economic structure in order to be replaced by one which will afford the people greater facilities for progress.

These pages were written more than six months ago when Gandhism was at its highest. But the subsequent events have proved that no mistake was made in the analysis of the movement and the criticism of its leadership. The conflicting social tendencies, that were mixed up confusedly in the superficially united national struggle, are in a process of clarification. A readjustment of forces is taking place before the struggle can enter into a more advanced and intense phase. After having been for several years the organ of orthodox nationalism dominated by the dying forces of reaction, the National Congress has landed in political bankruptcy. Today it stands at the cross-roads. It must either adjust its socio-political convictions in accordance with the forces behind the great mass upheaval, or put itself straight on the tracks of constitutional democracy. The latter course will take it back under Moderate leadership, which is convinced that the British connection is beneficial to the economic interests of that class of the people whose political representative they are. To carry the discussion of this possibility further does not come under the purview of this book, which does not go beyond pointing out the social tendencies latent in the contemporary political movement. The question of practical politics and the formulation of a programme commensurate with the nature recently revealed by the movement, will have to be dealt with in a subsequent work.

The most outstanding feature of the Indian national movement has been its lack of theoretical foundation. A modern political movement involving a sweeping mass-action, cannot go on for ever with antiquated religious ideology. On the other hand, the impotent constitutionalism of the Moderates falls miserably short of the mark, although it serves the purpose of the bourgeoisie. The Indian people is engaged in a social struggle of historic and to a certain extent of unprecedented character. There must be a socio-political philosophy behind this great movement. This much-needed ideological background of our struggle is not to be invented from the imagination of great men; it will be evolved out of the material forces making the birth, growth and success of such a struggle possible. To study our social conditions, actual as well as of the past, and to watch the evolution of the economic forces is indispensable for those who desire to understand that the people of India are progressing along a course common to the entire human race. We have our peculiar problems to solve; there are peculiar obstacles to be overcome on our way. But the fact remains that we are involved in a great struggle which calls for profound understanding of the socio-economic forces making for the progress of the Indian people.

The following pages are devoted to this study, which will help to direct the movement.

March, 1922 Manabendra Nath Roy

CHAPTER ONE

The Growth of the Bourgeoisie

Contrary to the general notion, India is not under the feudal system. In India, feudalism was destroyed, or more correctly speaking, undermined not by a violent revolution, as in Europe, but by a comparatively peaceful and gradual process. Feudalism, as the basis of social economics, received the first death-blow in the earlier years of the British possession in the middle of the 18th century, when the political power passed into the hands of the representatives of a foreign commercial bourgeoisie. In proportion as the British East India Company went on making the power of British commercial capital supreme in India, the foundation of the feudal system could not help being undermined. But it took the East India Company almost a hundred years to consolidate its supremacy all over the country. Therefore, though weakened, feudalism maintained its existence, at least in form, throughout this period. From the very beginning of the British occupation, the final proprietorship in land was taken away from the Indian landowning class, either by force or by fraud, and was vested in the British Government. In other words, in place of the feudal lords, the representative of British commercial capital became the owner of the land.

The last vestiges of feudal power were shattered by the failure of the revolution of 1857, which is known as the Sepoy Mutiny. The revolution of 1857 was nothing but the last effort of the dethroned feudal potentates to regain their power. It was a struggle between the worn-out feudal system and the newly-introduced commercial capitalism for political supremacy. At the same time, when feudalism was crumbling down in Europe before the rising bourgeoisie, a vibration of this great social struggle did not remain unfelt in India. But during the one hundred years preceding 1857, the normal economic development and the rise of the native bourgeoisie had been prevented in India by the following causes: First, the forcible export of more than 70 per cent of the accumulated wealth of India by the East India Company in order to help the industrial development of England. Second, the deliberate destruction of the craft industries and the consequent forcing of the artisan class back to the land, instead of into the modern machine industries, as in Europe. The craft industry was also in the process of destruction in Europe, but the difference lay in the fact that, whereas in Europe, it succumbed before a higher form of production, namely the machine, which evolved as a new social force—in India the process of destruction was premeditated and violent. Indian craft industries did not die in order to give place to a higher form of production within the country. They were the victims of the industrial growth in England. But historically speaking, the broad results were the same, namely, the political power passed on to the hands of a new social class, controlling superior means of production, thus bringing about the undermining of the feudal system as an economic force and the destruction of the craft industries. Practically the whole country was brought directly under capitalist exploitation after the failure of the revolt of 1857. The Government of India was removed from the hands of the East India Company and transferred to the Crown.

Today, India is divided into four distinct classes, namely, 1. the landed aristocracy, including the native chiefs, 2. the bourgeoisie and the intellectuals, 3. the petty peasantry and 4. the working class, including the landless peasants. Of the 17,328 big landowners, 700 are classed in the category of Native States. Their chiefs are called Feudatory or Protected Wards of the British Government. One-third of the area of the entire country or 709,555 square miles is governed by these Chiefs, and is known as Native India. The biggest of these States is Hyderabad, or the Nizam's Dominions, which equals Italy in area, with 13,500,000 population. The smallest is limited to only five villages. The aggregate population of Native India is 72,000,000, a little less than one-fourth of the entire population of the country. The existence of these Native States is responsible for India's being called a feudal country. Theoretically, the Native Chiefs enjoy the sovereign power within their respective territories, but practically, they have no power whatever, much less do they constitute the backbone of the social-economic structure of the country. The internal administration of none of these States is feudal; except a few, none of these ruling chiefs is directly descended from the feudal nobility of pre-British India. To all intents and purposes, they are puppets in the hands of the British Government. Besides the local and municipal administration, all these States are governed politically and militarily by the British, commercially and industrially by the native bourgeoisie. In fact, the native bourgeoisie has more influence in the government of the Native States than in the Government of India. All these States have Legislative Councils of their own, representing the local commercial and landowning class, and lately the industrial bourgeoisie is fast making itself supreme. But the autocrat in whom the absolute power is vested for all practical purposes is the Resident, who is the representative of the British Government. Originally, these Residents were sent to the Courts of the Native Princes, as ambassadors of the British Government, but being the representatives of the more advanced social class, namely, the bourgeoisie, these residents have in course of time become the arbiters of the States. Therefore we see that even in these Native States where at least the shadow of feudalism still clings to a certain extent, it is the bourgeoisie which wields the political power.

In the internal administration of many of the larger Native States the progressive tendency of the bourgeoisie is more clearly manifested. In States like Mysore, Travancore, Baroda, Cochin etc., the percentage of illiteracy is much lower than in British India. Whereas in the latter primary education is not even free, in some of the Native States it is free and compulsory. In recent years, the industrialization of the country has been more rapid in the Native States than in British territories. The condition of the peasantry in these States is the same as in British India. In short, the remnants of feudalism are not to be found in the Native States any more than in the British territories, except in the courts of the pampered puppets.

The Native Chiefs, oppressed as they are by the British, are nevertheless conscious of the fact that their continued existence is doomed to destruction, and it is only by grace of the British Government that they are maintained as a conservative factor in the society. British power in India has never been based upon these scions of an extinct feudalism; on the contrary, it is the Government of India, representative of the British bourgeoisie, that maintains them grafted upon the social order. Consequently, they know very well that they owe their existence to the British power, so they are heart and soul pro-British, and will help the latter in any exigency, as was shown in the last war.

The remaining 16,628 of the above mentioned 17,328 big estate-owners are also directly or indirectly connected with the feudal monarchs who ruled over India after the fall of the Mughal Empire. Thus they, together with the 700 Native Chiefs, constitute the landed aristocracy of India. These aristocrats, together with their families and dependent relations, number 540,175 out of a total population of 320,000,000. The total number of persons who live on land rent is 8,500,000, according to the census of 1911. (Figures for 1920–1 are not available). Except for the 540,175 mentioned above, who belong to the aristocracy proper, the remaining eight million belong to the landholding class. The difference betwen the landowners and the landholders is that the former nominally own their estate under the protection of, or as feudatories of the British Government, and their properties are subject to the feudal laws of inheritance, being handed down from father to eldest son. The second class hold their land on permanent or temporary lease from the Government. The rent paid by them to the Government is sometimes permanently fixed, sometimes assessed periodically, according to the changed valuation of the land.

The landholding class can be counted as old as the British Government in India. It rose out of the chaos which followed the fall of the Mussulman Empire and preceded the consolidation of the British power. Its forerunners were the usurers and high officials of the later years of the Mussulman administration. In the last part of the 18th century the country was ravaged by widespread famines caused by the deliberate destruction of the craft industries, the unrestricted export of food-grains, heavy fall in the total production of food-stuff owing to climatic conditions, the transfer of extensive areas of land to the cultivation of indigo and jute and the laying waste of large tracts due to the continued state of civil war. As a result of these things, the great bulk of the peasantry found itself heavily indebted, and their holdings fell into the hands of the usurers and former government officials who had accumulated a certain amount of capital. The East India Company, which in those days was unable to control alone the disturbed population because of its numerical weakness, encouraged the growth of this class of landholders, who were allowed to hold the land on behalf of the Government, in whom the title of final ownership was vested. Thus the elements that might have given rise to a native bourgeoisie were diverted from their natural development into a landholding class, for the convenience of a foreign bourgeoisie who conquered the political power and wanted to monopolize the right of exploiting the whole population. The modern Indian bourgeoisie is largely derived from this landholding class, which is investing its accumulated wealth more and more in commercial and industrial enterprises, now that the British Government has been forced to change its policy of holding back the industrial development of India. The smaller landholders find it more profitable to get rid of their land and to invest their money in trade and commerce, and the result is a growing concentration of land in the hands of big capitalist concerns. This tendency towards concentration will be shown later on in detail. (Chap. II).

The Indian intellectuals who, together with the progressive element in the landholding class, form the basis of the modern bourgeoisie, are the creation of the British Government. Already in the earlier years of its rule, the British Government found out that it was more profitable to employ natives in the clerical and administrative posts of lower ranks than to bring out men from England for these works. Besides, it was necessary to depend on the Indians for the purpose of local administration. It was impossible that the numerous personnel required to maintain the cumbersome British bureaucracy in India could be recruited from the home country. On the other hand, the big British commercial firms in India needed the services of the cheaply paid clerks and other employees. For any one of these capacities, in the earlier days of the British occupation, no less than fifty Indians could be hired for the amount of money to be paid to an Englishman coming out of England. Therefore, modern education was introduced by the British Government in the second decade of the 19th century. Since then, the modern intelligentsia has been growing very rapidly, transcending the limits marked out for them by the foreign rulers, and capturing entirely the professions of medicine, law and teaching. Today, the English are practically ousted from these professions by the Indians. According to the census figures of 1911, the number of people employed in public administration and professions amounted to 7,973,662. This figure does not include the clerks and employees of the commercial firms. These professions proved to be lucrative, and money began to be accumulated in the hands of the upper strata of the intellectual class. In 1850 the total accumulated wealth of this class, as shown in the investments in Government securities, amounted to £69,000,000. Since there was no industrial or other profitable means of investment, this whole amount was invested in Government securities. The total capital invested in Native banks at that time amounted to £19,000,000. Land offered the only other form of profitable investment at this period, and the accumulated savings of this class were also invested in land-leases, which were in the process of transfer from the hands of the big holders on account of their failure to meet higher government assessments, as well as from the small holders, because of their heavy indebtedness. Thus a considerable portion of land has been passing out of the control of the old conservative holders and into the hands of the more progressive rich intellectuals. This class of progressive landholders, which simultaneously is engaged in many instances, in the lucrative liberal professions also, is rapidly marching itself into the ranks of the bourgeoisie proper, since in proportion as the capital accumulated in its hand grows, it extends its investments to industrial enterprises. Today in India are to be found numerous instances in which the rich landholder and industrialist are combined in the same person.

In the earlier years of British rule, there existed in India a great deal of inter-provincial activity in banking and commerce. This internal trade was completely destroyed by the introduction of the modern banking system and the establishment of British commercial houses in the first half of the 19th century. The result was that the prosperous Indian banking and merchant class was reduced to petty shopkeepers. After 1860, this inter-provincial commerce again revived, with the accumulation of wealth. The reason for this revival was the continued expansion of European capitalistic enterprise, which pushed its exploitation further and further into the country, in search of raw materials and a market for its manufactured goods, and created a class of Indian middlemen in the process. The growth in the volume of foreign trade led to the enrichment of this native mercantile class, which soon found itself in the possession of considerable capital for investment, but foreign trade and international banking being monopolized by the foreign ruling class, the Indian merchants found this way blocked to them and an outlet for their energy and capital was found in industrial enterprises. The first power-driven cotton-mill was erected at Ahmedabad in 1851.

Modern industry owned by native capital remained insignificant in India till 1880. In that year there were 58 cotton-textile mills with a paid-up capital of £3,832,000 and 22 jute-textile mills with a capital of £2,246,000. The number of workers employed in these two industries was 68,000. Besides these, and other private industrial enterprises, including native interprovincial commerce and banking houses, there was £90,000,000 invested in savings banks and joint-stock companies. This capital was all in the hands of the Indian mercantile class except for 0.02 per cent which was owned by English capitalists. Thus as far back as the eighties of the last century, Indian capitalism, as represented by the liberal professions and landholding class, and the Indian merchants and traders, was ready to enter into its industrial phase, but the foreign Government was opposed to it. The Imperial Capital of Britain wanted to hold India as a source of raw materials and as a market for finished goods. Consequently, the young native machine-industry was subjected to special taxations which seriously checked its growth, and in many cases, ruined it in the very beginning. But the cheapness of raw materials and labour kept the textile mills going, in spite of the fact that they were the main object of governmental attack.

The increasing wealth of the intellectuals and the absence of profitable means of investment made them discontented with the British Government. Finding it beneath their dignity to carry on trade, and industrial outlets being denied by the Government, land and Government securities were the only remaining sources of investment left to this class. The interest on securities was very low, being but 3 to 3½ per cent. It was not at all attractive for an ambitious class. Neither was the income from land-investments very high. Besides, the area of productive land being comparatively limited, no very large scope was presented. The native capitalist class was excluded from building railways, tramways, exploiting mines and other industries whose development was not obstructed by the Government. All these industries were the monopoly of English capital. The liberal professions were overcrowded, so the rich intelligentsia found its further economic development blocked on all sides. The British Government was seen to be the cause of all this, and there arose the necessity of fighting against it. Economic necessity forced the intellectual bourgeoisie to begin its political struggle, which was initiated in the form of the Indian National Congress, whose first session was held in 1882 in Bombay, under the presidency of W. C. Banerji, a rich lawyer who had his savings invested in commercial and industrial enterprises.* The object of this political movement was manifest,—it was to replace or at least to curtail the power of the British Government, which was standing in the way of the economic development of the bourgeoisie. This movement was headed by rich lawyers, merchants, mill-owners, physicians, or in other words, that progressive element of the society which possessed capital to be invested.

In the last years of the 19th century, the power of Indian capital went on growing, though rather slowly, because of the fact that it was denied the outlet of industrial development. Nevertheless, since there was a class with money to be invested, and great masses of people were looking for employment, having been deprived of their land and of their ancient handicraft occupations, industries kept growing despite all obstructions created by the Government.

The big landholders of the province of Bengal enjoy a privileged position under the Permanent Settlement introduced in 1793. According to this system, they pay a fixed scale of taxation, their holdings being exempt from new assessments. According to the Bengal Tenancy Act, the cultivators to whom the big landholders leased out their lands, enjoy the right of occupancy. As a result, the agricultural production of the province of Bengal has always been high, and the rental-value of the land increased enormously. But the Permanent Settlement prevented the Government from participating directly in this increased land-value. A means to nullify the effects of the Permanent Settlement was found in the partition of Bengal in 1905. By this partition, the eastern half of the province, containing the rich rice-producing area, was placed under the administration of a newly-created provincial government, with the power to revise the old system of taxation. Thus arose a new conflict between the Government and the rich landholding class which, as stated before, contained a large number of intellectuals.

The unification of landed and capitalist interests as against British rule, was achieved. In 1905 the political movement of the Indian bourgeoisie as represented by the Indian National Congress, backed by the progressive landholding class, used the economic weapon of boycott against British capitalism. The 25th session of the Indian National Congress held in Calcutta in 1906, under the presidency of Dadabhai Naoroji, also a rich merchant lawyer, declared a boycott of English goods until the Partition of Bengal Act was repealed. The economic power of the Indian bourgeoisie, composed of the intellectuals, mercantile capitalists, liberal landholders, and the industrial capitalists, had acquired sufficient strength to enable it to declare an open struggle against the foreign capitalistic monopoly.

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* The first session of the Congress was held, in fact, in 1885 with W.C. Bonnerjee as President. S.N.R.

The number of factories in 1905 amounted to 2,688. Of these, only 718 were non-power, the rest being either steam- or electricity-driven. The textile industry had grown to count upon 178 weaving mills, with a capital of £10, 762,000 and 750 ginning mills owned by individual capitalists (figures for capital invested not available). The jute industry counted 38 mills for weaving, with a capital of £5,393,358, and 100 pressing mills owned by private capital. According to the Government statistics, the capital of joint-stock companies registered in India, engaged in industrial enterprise amounted to £57,000,000. The amount of capital invested in industries had increased almost tenfold since 1880, whereas investment in Government securities had increased by only £4,000,000 the total amount being £94,616,740, during the same period. With industrial development, Indian capital also began to create modern banking institutions. In 1905 there existed in India nine banks with Indian capital. These were in addition to the native banking firms based on usury. There were six woollen mills and seven paper factories.

The theory on which the Boycott Movement was based was that this growing native industry should be protected and stimulated in order to increase the national wealth, the only way of improving the economic condition of the people, according to the bourgeois reasoning of that epoch. Owing to the fact that Indian industry was too new and weak to hold its own in a competition with British capitalism, the object of the boycott movement was not attained. British goods could not be thrown off the market, simply because Indian industries were not able to produce the amount needed for consumption. But the Government found it necessary to recognize the strength of the bourgeoisie. In 1909, the Morley-Minto Reforms were introduced, conceding to this class some nominal share in the administration of the country. For the first time, an Indian was appointed in the Viceroy's Executive Council, which corresponded to the board of advisers of an autocratic monarchy. The choice fell on one of the premier lawyers, who was at the same time a rich landholder. The number of elected members in the Legislative Councils, both Imperial and Provincial, was increased. Special electorates were conceded to the landholding class as well as to the Mussulman bourgeoisie. A Royal Commission was appointed to investigate the possibility of increasing the percentage of the native element in the public services. In 1911 the first phase in the political struggle of the Indian bourgeoisie culminated in the repeal of the Act of the Partition of Bengal. The Indian bourgeoisie was very much encouraged by its first political victory. It kept on the struggle until a year later, the Government of India had to declare through the mouth of the King-Emperor, who visited India expressly for this purpose, that self-government would be conceded to the Indian people at the earliest possible moment.

Nor was the victory of the bourgeoisie in the industrial field altogether negligible. In 1908, the number of cotton-weaving mills had increased to 212, with a proportionate increase in the amount of capital invested therein. The number of jute mills (weaving) also increased to 56, with about 50 per cent increase in the invested capital. In both these industries, a small percentage of English capital had always been invested, but after 1905 the proportion as well as the actual amount of English capital invested in these industries, showed a noticeable decrease. Besides the cotton and woollen textile, which benefited most by the boycott movement, a general impetus was felt in the industrial field as a whole. New industries were started, and existing ones extended and modernized. The following industries felt the impetus most: coal-mining, glass-making, matches, flour and rice-milling, oil-mills, tanning, leather manufacture, metal-works, pottery, soap, pencil, paper, dyeing, etc., etc.

The number of joint-stock companies increased from 1,530 in 1905 to 2,061 in 1910. The amount of capital invested in industrial enterprises was calculated at £72,800,000 in 1908 and £108,606,000 in 1910. The number of banks owned by Indian capital increased to 14 and 16 respectively. The industrial and commercial concerns run with private capital, about which no figures are available, also showed a great increase, the iron and steel industry received a great impetus when in 1907 the Tata Iron and Steel Company was organized with a capital hitherto unprecedented in India.

Urged on by its initial political victories, the Indian bourgeoisie went on consolidating its position economically. Although it was not until the Great European War that Indian capital received the fullest opportunity to assert itself, a considerable amount of industrial and commercial activity was felt all over the country in the years preceding the war. The growth of modern industry is shown by the fact that the value of machinery imported in the year 1913 amounted to nearly £10,000,000. Besides, in the same year, two-and-a-half million pound sterling worth of parts of machinery were manufactured in India. In 1914, the capital invested in Government securities amounted to £121,500,000, drawing interest at 3½ to 4 per cent, whereas there were 2,545 joint-stock companies with an aggregate capital of £113,396,000. The figures for the capital invested in privately-owned industrial enterprises are not available.

The war opened up a new era for the Indian bourgeoisie. The necessity for mobilizing her entire industrial strength for the production of war materials, combined with the dislocation of marine transport, owing firstly to the transfer of merchant vessels to naval purposes and secondly to the submarine warfare, made it impossible for England to keep the Indian market supplied with manufactured goods. This placed the Indian manufacturers in an unexpectedly advantageous position. The overwhelming competition of the imperial capital was suddenly removed and Indian capital was presented with a free field of development. But this was not all. The British Government itself, which so far had persistently followed the policy of keeping India industrially backward, found it necessary to change its policy. Since the beginning of the century, there had been growing discontent in the country. In the years preceding the war, this discontent had become widespread and acute, because of the increasing poverty of the masses and the enormous growth in the number of unemployables among the intelligentsia. So at the outbreak of the war, things looked rather threatening in India. Attempts were made to overthrow British rule by organizing armed uprisings. Signs of revolt appeared among the Indian troops. The political movement for national liberation, originally started under the auspices of the wealthy intellectuals and growing bourgeoisie, had been largely captured by the so-called Extremists, whose ranks were swelled by the lower strata of middle-class intellectuals. Terroristic societies had been active since 1904. The tendency towards complete separation of India from the British Empire by means of a violent revolution was no longer confined within the secret revolutionary organizations. It began to spread among the ranks of the Extremists, who constituted the Left Wing of the Indian National Congress.

There were two factors behind the political movement in India. First, the rise of a class which had accumulated a considerable amount of capital in its hands and which wanted to have the right of participating in, if not monopolizing the exploitation of the natural riches and labour power of the country. Second, the growing poverty and the existence of a great number of unemployed and unemployables, due to the intensive and extensive exploitation of foreign capital, which so far had found it profitable to keep the country industrially undeveloped. Both these factors were working against British rule.

But socially speaking, they were contradictory, one to the other. The fact that they had a common enemy to fight made it possible for them to unite, and a united effort of these two factors would bring about the destruction of British rule. To prevent this union was naturally the desire and purpose of the British Government. Among the bourgeoisie was found the element which could be won over, or at least whose actions could be moderated by means of political concessions. But in India, the bourgeoisie of 1916 was not the same as in 1909. It was no longer possible to placate it with hollow political and administrative privileges. It wanted economic concessions, a share in the exploitation of the country.

In the first years of the war, Japan began to capture a considerable part of the Indian market, formerly supplied by English manufacturers. It was practically impossible for the British capitalists to keep the Japanese goods out of the Indian market. All these internal and external reasons taken together, made the British Government take the Indian bourgeoisie into confidence. In the very beginning of the war, the promise of giving India self-government was repeated, provided India would help England in the prosecution of the war. As self-government means the transfer, wholly or partially, of the administration of the country to the Indian bourgeoisie, this promise won the active support of the propertied class to the cause of the war. Hoping to gain at least a considerable control over the government of the country, this class suspended its political struggle and helped the British Government in the recruitment of Indian troops and in discouraging the nationalist movement, now led by the lower middle class. These valuable services were paid by the granting of a 3½ per cent import duty on cotton imports in 1916. This was a protection granted to the principal industry of India, and it meant such a great economic concession to the bourgeoisie that the latter readily helped the Government of India to raise a war-fund of £100,000,000 as a gift to England. The immediate effect of this was that the amount of capital invested in the textile factories owned by registered joint-stock companies, rose to £24,500,000 in 1917, the number of mills being 276. Besides, there were 1,800 cotton-ginning factories and a considerable number of weaving factories owned by individual capitalists or private companies. Since 1880 up to 1917, the cotton-textile industry had increased 375 per cent in the amount of capital invested, 792 per cent in looms, and 411 per cent in spindles employed, the all-round increase being 427 per cent. By the year 1917, India could produce the entire quantity of yarn needed for her textile industries and half the amount of textile-woven goods, or in other words, the native production was 94.6 per cent of the imports as compared with 42 per cent in the years preceding the war. In 1917, India produced

1,614,216,458 yards of woven cotton-goods valued at £18,100,000, besides a considerable quantity of yarn of great value.

The average total capital of companies registered every year from 1910 to 1914 was approximately £12,000,000. The figure rose to £18,000,000 in 1917–18; and in the two years following the conclusion of the war, it reached the enormous height of £183,000,000, and £100,000,000 respectively. Of course these figures, especially the latter ones, do not represent the actual amount paid up on registering the companies; but they signify nevertheless the large industrial and commercial prospect the promoters had in view. Besides, this capital inflation was intended to give a tolerable appearance to the extraordinary rates of dividends paid to the shareholders.

The profit made in the Indian industries in the last few years is veritably fabulous. Cheap, ignorant and unorganized labour, together with an abundance of easily available raw materials enables the owner to make such excessive profits. The average dividend paid by the important cotton-mills in 1920 was 120 per cent, the highest figure being as much as 365 per cent. The number of mills coming under this category is quite large. The actual profit made in some of these mills came up to 500 per cent, if the habit of capital inflation so frequently indulged in by the Indian companies, is taken into consideration. The average rate of dividends paid by the jute mills in the same years was still higher, being not less than 140 per cent. One concern, the Hoogly Mills of Calcutta, paid as much as 400 per cent. In many other industries, for example, tea-plantation and manufacture, coal and gold-mining, leather works etc., the rate of profit, if not so high, is also very considerable. The average in the collieries is 90 per cent. From this it is very easy to imagine the rapidity with which the Indian capitalist class is enriching itself. The inevitable result of this enormous porfiteering is the accentuated growth of industries, because the profit is constantly increasing the capital ready for new investment.

The economic and industrial condition of the country in 1917 may be well appreciated from the following facts. There were more than 36,135 miles of railways, light railways not included, owned almost exclusively by English capital, a considerable portion of the light railways being Indian-owned. The number of workers employed on the railways including the industries directly allied with them, was 1,500,000. There were altogether about 9,000 industrial establishments, employing more than 2,000,000 workers. Over four thousand of these were driven by steam or electric power. There were 1,800 tea and coffee plantations, employing 900,000 workers. Great activity was shown in coal, petroleum, manganese, mica, iron and gold mining. The amount of business transacted through the principal ports and dockyards can be estimated from the fact that no less than 1,000,000 workers were employed. In 1919 the total profit made in the cotton, jute, woollen, paper, mining and leather industries was £45,000,000. The gross income of the railways was £77,600,000. It should be remembered that the amount of capital invested in the English-owned industries like railways is not taken into account here.

Great impetus was felt in the jute industry also. In 1917, the number of mills rose to 78 and the capital invested to £13,215,000. The amount of Indian capital invested in this industry has increased by 311 per cent since 1914. The entire industry has grown by 362 per cent in volume, and 528 per cent in capital since 1880. Manufactured jute exported in 1917–18 was valued at £30,000,000, 34 times more than the export of 1880. The woollen mills produced goods worth £1,405,000 in 1917 as against £400,000 in 1913. The production of paper-mills increased to £1,253,000 from £545,000 during the same period.

In 1917, India produced 18,200,000 tons of coal whereas the total consumption for that year amounted to 17,849,000 tons. The increase in the coal output was 2,000,000 tons more than the 1913 output. In the same year, the coal exported from India amounted to 408,117 tons worth £253,000. The consumption of coal in Indian industries for that year was 9,000,000 tons, as against 10,326,000 tons in the Japanese industries, exclusive of her merchant marine. The petroleum output of India in 1917–18 was 288,759,523 gallons valued at £1,093,000. Of this, only 139,000,000 gallons were consumed in the country, leaving the rest for export.

Indian commerce grew in proportion too. Of late, Indian merchants are taking an increasing part in overseas commerce. She has become a competitor in the markets of the Dutch Indies, Malay Peninsula, East Africa, Afghanistan and to a certain extent, China. She supplies these markets with manufactured or partially manufactured cotton goods. Her export of finished goods is increasing, whereas the export of raw materials, especially jute and cotton, is decreasing.

That the Indian bourgeoisie has not been slow to seize the opportunity presented to it by the war conditions and the changed economic policy of the British Government is proved in the following table, which shows the percentage of the decrease in the investment of Indian capital in Government Securities as against increase in the various industrial pursuits. (Table on p. 202)

The change in the economic policy of the British Government was marked by the appointment in 1916 of the Indian Industrial Commission, with the object of finding the best means of fomenting the industrial development of the country. The Commission constituted ten members, out of which four were Indians, one being a leader of

	1914	1917	1918	1919	1920
Government Securities	100	70	67	74	62
Banks	100	106	112	116	137
Municipal Debts	100	89	84	84	81
Jute Mills	100	311	467	383	563
Cotton Mills	100	132	162	167	386
Woollen Mills	100	106	125	125	187
Coal Mines	100	136	134	157	149
Tea	100	137	125	123	136
Flour Mills	100	137	206	238	406
Iron and Steel	100	332	295	284	207

the Right Wing of the Indian National Congress, which is the political organ of the bourgeoisie, and the other three were the premier industrialists of the country. The commission was instructed to examine and report upon the possibilities of further industrial development in India and to submit its recommendations with special reference to the following questions:

A. Whether new openings for the profitable employment of Indian capital in commerce and industry can be indicated.

B. Whether, and if so, in what manner, Government can usefully give direct encouragement to industrial development, (1) by rendering technical advice more freely available, (2) by the demonstration of the practical possibility on a commercial scale of particular industries, (3) by affording, directly or indirectly, financial assistance to industrial enterprises, or (4) by any other means which are not incompatible with the existing fiscal policy of the Government of India.

The Commission completed its work and submitted a lengthy report in 1918. The following are the features of the recommendations contained in the report: (1) That in future, Government must play an active part in the industrial development of the country. (2) That India produces all the raw materials necessary for the requirements of a modern community, but is unable to manufacture many of the articles and materials essential alike in times of peace and war. Therefore it is vital for the Government to ensure the establishment in India of those industries whose absence exposes us to grave danger in the event of war. (3) That modern methods should be introduced in agriculture so that labour now wastefully employed would be set free for industries. (4) That universal primary education should be introduced, but that it would be unfair and unjust to impose upon employers this duty which devolves rather upon the State. (5) That institutions for technical and mechanical training should be introduced widely. (6) That the policy of *laissez-faire* in industrial affairs to which the Government clung so long, should be abandoned. (7) That the establishment of Industrial Banks should be encouraged by means of Government financing if necessary (8) That the necessity of securing the economic safety of the country and the inability of the people to secure it without the co-operation of the Government, are apparent. Therefore the Government must adopt a policy of energetic intervention in industrial affairs.

The political expression of the British Government's reconciliation with the Indian bourgeoisie is in the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme. Taking advantage of the unexpected opportunity presented to it by the war conditions of 1917–18, the Indian capitalist class acquired such a secure economic position that it was no longer possible for the Government to ignore it. To revive after the war the old policy of obstructing the industrial growth of the country would surely force the Indian bourgeoisie, which had developed its political consciousness and organization sufficiently, to place itself actively at the head of the revolutionary movement which was spreading wider and wider throughout India. The only way of preventing such a catastrophe was to devise means for divorcing the political ambition of the bourgeoisie from the spontaneous revolutionary upheaval among the masses. Already in 1911, the Indian bourgeoisie had been promised self-government, a promise which was repeated in the beginning of the European war in order to win its support. The war was over. The Indian bourgeoisie had stood faithfully by the British Government. The time had come when some considerable concessions had to be made to it. These concessions were made by the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, whose principal features were as follows: (1) The control of the British Parliament over the Government of India exercised through the Secretary of State for India was modified. (2) The number of Indian members of the Viceroy's Executive Council was increased. (3) The system of dual-chamber was introduced in the Legislature and the number as well as proportion of elected Indian members was increased. (4) The franchise was so extended as to embrace all owning property, exceeding a certain minimum. (5) The actual power of law-making, which had so far been vested in the Executive, was partially conceded to the Legislature. (6) Indian ministers were appointed to assist the Provincial Governors, these members being recruited from the leaders of the moderate nationalists. (7) The size as well as power of the provincial Legislatures was also extended. (8) The number of Indian elements in the superior posts of the Civil Services was increased to 33 per cent. (9) New facilities were provided for entering the Civil Services by holding the examinations in India as well as in England. (10) The difference between the scale of salaries of the Indian and English officials was reduced. (11) Municipal administration was given over to the local bourgeoisie to a great extent.

But the remarkable feature of this Reform, which is said to have brought a new political era to India, is the economic concessions made to Indian capital. The following passages quoted from the Reform Scheme speak for themselves.

> As the desirability of industrial expansion became clearer, the Government of India fully shared the desire of the Indian leaders to secure the economic advantages that would follow the local manufacture of raw products. English theories as to the appropriate limits of the State's activity are inapplicable to India. We believe that this is true in case of industries, and that if the resources of the country are to be developed the Government must take action. We feel no surprise that there remained a feeling of bitterness among the advanced parties. The people have recognized their inability to carry out their programme (of industrial development) without the help and guidance of the Government. The war has created a new position. The prohibition of imports from enemy countries was welcomed as giving India an opportunity of replacing foreign articles by home products. After the war, the need for industrial development will be all the greater, unless India is to become a mere dumping ground for the manufactures of foreign nations, which will then be competing all the more keenly for the markets on which their political strength so perceptibly depends. India will certainly consider herself entitled to claim all the help that the Government can give her to enable her to take her place as a manufacturing country. On all grounds, a forward policy in industrial development is urgently called for, not merely to give India economic stability, but in order to satisfy the aspirations of her people, who desire to see her stand before the world as a well-poised, up-to-date country; in order to provide an outlet for the energies of her youths, who are otherwise drawn exclusively to government services or to a few over-stocked professions; and in order that money now lying unproductive may be applied to the benefit of the whole community. Imperial interests also demand that the natural resources of India should henceforth be better utilized. We cannot measure the access of strength which an industrialized India will bring to the power of the Empire. Mere traders may be disposed to regard each new source of manufacture as a possible curtailment of their sources of profit. But each new acquisition of wealth increases the purchasing power of the whole.
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> The war has thrown a strong light on the military importance of economic development. Nowadays the products of an industrially developed community coincide so nearly with the catalogue of munitions of war that the development of India's natural resources becomes a matter of almost military necessity. We believe that this consideration is not a matter of indifference to India's political leaders: and that they are anxious to see India

> self-supporting in respect of military requirements. The government must admit and shoulder its responsibility for furthering the industrial development of the country.
>
> We have been assured that Indian capital will be forthcoming once it is realized that it can be invested with security and profit in India, a purpose that will be furthered by the provision of increased facilities for banking and credit. The real enthusiasm for industries, which is not confined to the ambitions of a few individuals but rests on the general desire to see Indian capital and labour applied jointly to the good of the country, seems to us of the happiest augury . . .

This rather long quotation is made because herein are indicated the reasons which forced the British capitalist class not only to recognize the Indian bourgeoisie as a factor to be taken into consideration, but to help it develop by conceding it the position of junior partnership in the exploitation of India. The object behind this remarkable change of policy on the part of British imperialism was to split the revolutionary movement by making clear to the bourgeoisie that it was no longer impossible for it to realize its ambitions under British rule. The opportunity to develop as an economically powerful class was what the Indian bourgeoisie was striving after; their political movement was a struggle to conquer this right. The economic and industrial advancement secured during the war was strengthened by the declaration of change in the governmental policy, and the Indian capitalist class entered a period of spectacular development from 1918. The growth of industries was very rapid and commerce extended enormously.

In 1918–19 the capital invested in joint-stock companies was £255,000,000 as against £135,000,000 in 1913–14. Besides, there were 3,600 factories owned by private capital whereas in 1913–14 the number of factories owned by private capital was 1,300. The amount of wealth accumulated in the hands of the bourgeoisie as shown by the investment in Government securities to find a profitable investment of which wealth was the principal burden of the commissions appointed and reforms introduced by the government—rose to £359,000,000 in the same year.* As a result, a considerable development took place in the industries of jute and cotton textile, engineering, iron and steel, coal-mining, etc. Another factor helped the transfer of a large capital from trade and commerce to industries during the war. This was the closing down of German and Austrian firms, which used to carry on a large export and import trade in raw and manufactured products through the Indian middlemen.

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*One hundred years ago i.e., in 1820 the same class had only £20,000,000 invested in government securities.

With the growth of the native industries, a considerable change took place in the sea-borne trade. In the imports, an increase was shown in machineries, while there was a decrease in cotton-textiles. The amount of raw materials exported decreased. According to the report of the Director of Commercial Intelligence, the volume of Foreign Trade of India was valued at £600,000,000 in 1920 as against one-sixth of this amount twenty years ago; the greatest increase in imports was in machinery and kerosene. In presenting his report, the Director said: 'India's purchasing power must be developed by developing her industries. Manufactured and partly-manufactured goods are of greater value than raw materials. This tendency has been marked in the last years. Jute is exported manufactured. A great portion of the oil-seeds are crushed and the oil exported. Thus, India has been capable of buying more machinery and other foreign goods for her industrial development.'

The amount of manufactured cotton imported in 1920 showed a decrease of 60 per cent in the quantity of yarn and 36.5 per cent in the quantity of woven goods as compared with 1914. In 1920, cotton-goods constituted 28 per cent of the total imports of India, whereas in 1914, it was over 50 per cent. On the other hand, the export of raw materials has decreased by 19 per cent. In the pre-war period, India used to import a considerable amount of railway materials but in the last years, an increasing part of her demand is being met by native industry. The contract to supply steel rails to one state railway and to two other systems owned by English companies has been given to the Tata Iron and Steel Company, an Indian firm.

Jute, raw and manufactured, used to form a great part of India's export trade, being 24 per cent of the total. A great change has taken place in this. The export of raw jute in 1919–20 was only 77 per cent of that of 1913–14. At the present time, nearly 75 per cent of the raw produce is consumed in the local mills as against 50 per cent in the pre-war years.

The export of raw cotton decreased by 22 per cent in 1920 as against 1914, whereas the increase in the export of cotton-woven goods was 120 per cent. The total production of the cotton-textile industry rose by 41 per cent. The latest figures as to the growth of the Indian manufacturing industry are not available, but it is generally held that the industrial capital of India today is 2,000 per cent greater than in the pre-war days.

This vast increase of wealth of the Indian bourgeoisie has not been achieved by depriving British capital of the full benefit of Imperial exploitation. We will see in the next chapter that with the increase in the wealth of the bourgeoisie, the poverty of the masses has also increased. Today the bourgeoisie in India is not a negligible factor. If the British Government is trying to win it over to its own side, this is because it can no longer suppress it or ignore it as a socio-economic factor. But on the other hand, in comparison with the vastness of the country and its population, as well as in competition with the Imperial capital, the Indian bourgeoisie cannot help being conscious of its weakness. Therefore, its political tactics are determined by the desire to acquire concessions and support from the British Government, in order to further its own development. It does not as yet feel itself strong enough to challenge the right of the British Government to be in India, but by virtue of its increasing wealth and rapidly concentrating capital in industrial enterprises, it has grown into a political power, so much so that the Government has to recognize it as such. The Government has made political as well as economic concessions, not because it finds in the new Indian bourgeoisie a mortal enemy, but because the growing revolutionary movement among the masses is forcing upon the authorities the necessity of compromising with that section of the people which is closer to themselves by class-interest. The Government is willing to admit the Indian bourgeoisie to a junior partnership in the exploitation of the country, but the Indian capitalist class, which already controls 75 per cent of the industry (excepting railways, mining and plantation) as well as a big share in the commerce, is not satisfied with this.

The more the British Government makes concession to the Indian bourgeoisie, the more ambitious the latter becomes. It knows quite well that it is necessary to make compromises with the Imperial capital, till the time comes when it will be in a position to openly contend for the right of monopoly of exploitation with the foreigner. But it also knows that British Imperialism cannot be overthrown without the help of the masses. So to deceive the workers, whose revolutionary consciousness is steadily growing, owing to their increased poverty, which is accentuated by the concentration of wealth in the hands of the bourgeoisie, the latter has thrown open the doors of the Indian National Congress to the masses. But at the same time, by declaring the boycott of British goods for the second time, the Indian bourgeoisie shows its tendency to aggrandize itself at the cost of the people. In the Indian bourgeoisie as well as in the masses, are to be found the objective forces making for a revolution. But these two factors are divided by class interest and this class differentiation is growing and is bound to grow wider in proportion to the further development of the Indian bourgeoisie. Both the forces are solidifying themselves in their own way; the masses in the growing number of trade-unions and peasant movements; the bourgeoisie in the political movement expressed by the National Congress. The fact that the Indian National Congress, under the leadership of Gandhi, succeeded in raising more than 10,000,000 rupees in three months for a National Fund demonstrates the growing solidarity of the Indian bourgeoisie. The All-India Muslim League, founded in 1905 under the auspices of the Government, to marshal the Mussulman capitalists and landed aristocracy in a political opposition to the Indian National Congress (originally composed of the Hindu elements of the population with a sprinkling of liberal Mussulman intellectuals), has abandoned its original role and merged itself into the national movement of the Indian bourgeoisie as a class. In short, today the latter constitutes a social class economically and politically well-knit, conscious of its historic mission. Undoubtedly, it is going to be at the vanguard of that national upheaval which will overthrow foreign rule, but the more class-conscious it becomes, the more it will lose the power to deceive the masses. The more the country develops, economically and industrially, under the leadership of the native capitalist class, the wider will grow the class-cleavage. Therefore, to rely on the national solidarity under purely bourgeois leadership for the purpose of destroying British rule in India, may not be always safe. The overthrow of the British rule will be achieved by the joint action of the bourgeoisie and the masses, but how this joint action can be consumated, still remains a question. It will be easier to solve this problem when the condition of the masses is analysed, in order to understand what a great gulf divides these two revolutionary factors.

CHAPTER TWO

The Condition of the Rural Population

In 1911 the total population of India was 315,000,000. This showed an increase of 21,000,000 over the figure of 1901, when the population amounted to 294,000,000. But a study of the census statistics shows that the actual increase by births was but 10,000,000, the remainder being due to more efficient methods of taking census, and to the inclusion of new territories within the census area. Thus the actual increase of the population of the country could not be called high, nor even normal in comparison with that of the European countries The cause of this low birth-rate is to be looked for in the chronic poverty of the rural population. Many statisticians, both official and non-official, have testified to the fact that the great bulk of the agricultural population lives in a state of perpetual starvation. According to William Digby, who held various high posts in the Indian Civil Service for twenty-five years, more than fifty per cent of the entire agricultural population never have their hunger satisfied once in their lives. Sir Charles Eliot, former provincial Governor of Bengal, declared that 40,000,000 of the inhabitants of India never get one full meal a day. Such testimony can be added to *ad infinitum*, when the history of Indian famines is known to all the world. Instances are not rare in which millions of people are swept away by famine and the resulting pestilences. According to Government estimates, 6,000,000 people died in 1918 of Spanish influenza (non-official estimates place the total mortality for that year from famine and disease at 32,000,000).

Although detailed statistics of the 1920–21 census are not yet available, the present population is estimated at nearly 320,000,000. This figure shows an increase of less than five million in the last ten years, despite the fact that the methods of census-taking have become more accurate, and the limits of census area have been extended to include outlying border districts.

Indian nationalists of all shades of opinion unite in declaring British imperialism responsible for all these evils, and the precarious condition of the people is laid solely at the door of the present governmental abuses. Their idea of a panacea for all these ills lies in the termination of foreign rule and the establishment of an autonomous or independent government. Their attitude can be summed up in the words of Sir Surendranath Bannerji, one of the veteran leaders of the Indian National Congress, in its session held in Lucknow in 1916; 'I have demonstrated that we are the natural leaders of the masses, the protectors of their interests, and those interests will be safe, far more safe in our hands, than in those of the foreign bureaucracy.'

Nobody can minimize the disastrous effects of British imperialism upon the Indian people, but in their political agitation, based consciously or unconsciously upon class interest, the Indian nationalists neglect to investigate other causes which are also responsible for the present condition of the agricultural population and which will continue after the termination of foreign rule, unless and until far-reaching changes in the present mode of production are brought about.

In 1911, 280,000,000 of the entire Indian population lived in villages and small towns of less than 5,000 inhabitants. But there existed a general tendency towards decrease in the rural population and an increase in that of the towns, especially of the great industrial cities. For example, in the ten years ending in 1911, the population of the city of Calcutta showed an increase of 14 per cent; that of Bombay 25 per cent, and of Ahmedabad 16 per cent, whereas the population of religious centres, in which there is always a great number of people engaged in non-productive professions, decreased, Benares by 5 per cent, Mathura by 4 per cent, etc. The urban population in 1911 was 35,000,000. There were thirty cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants, but in the last decade, this distribution has greatly changed. An increase is to be noted in the population of the newly-grown industrial centres. The growth of several of the principal urban industrial districts has been almost spectacular, as for instance, the population of the city of Calcutta, which rose from 1,300,000 in 1911 to 1,800,000 at the beginning of the war, and at present it is estimated at over 2,000,000. The growth of Bombay has been still more rapid, proportionately, if not in actual numbers.

Taking into consideration the vastness of the country and its population, India still remains predominantly agricultural, despite the rapid development of industry in recent years. Since the production is mainly agricultural, the economic condition of that part of the population engaged in an industry so important, is necessarily a determining factor in the national life. Therefore, the forces and agencies which affect this class must be carefully investigated and analysed, in order to determine the potential relation to the political movement of the country as a whole.

The entire rural population of India can be divided into two great classes, namely, those engaged in the exploitation of the earth's surface, and those engaged in handicrafts, transport and trade. The census of 1911 puts the number of the first class at 224,000,000. Of these, only eight and a half million lived on agricultural rent, i.e., belonged to the landholding class who took no part in actual production. All the rest were cultivators of the soil. Thus we find two-thirds of the entire Indian population engaged in agricultural pursuits. Before proceeding to an analysis of the present economic condition of this great class, we will briefly consider the condition of that other section of the rural population, consisting of handicraftsmen, transport workers and traders.

When the British first came to India, a prosperous artisan class existed. Not being able to compete with the imported machine-made commodities, this artisan class was forced to abandon its occupation and go back to the land, but the destruction of Indian handicrafts was achieved more by violence than by peaceful competition, in order to secure a monopoly for the imported goods on the market. As a result of this violent destruction of the means of livelihood of a large section of the people, a greater part of the population was forced to live by agriculture than the land-area justified, and so it is that ever since the British occupation, more people lived by agriculture than could, under normal circumstances, be provided for. The results of this crowding-out and destruction of handicrafts was first felt in the large towns and districts adjacent to big trading marts, leaving the handicraftsmen of the remote villages partially unaffected. Thus we find even as late as the last decades of the 19th century, the modest necessities of the rural population manufactured or produced either by the cultivator himself or by the village artisan. But of late, the increasing importation of foreign manufactured goods, as well as the production of new native machine-industries have been driving a great portion of the village artisan class out of their occupation. The population thus displaced has been partially absorbed, either among the land-workers or the city proletariat. The extension of railways and river-navigation has brought about very great changes in the local trades and primitive transport system of the rural area. In the earlier days, as in all the industrially backward countries, the Indian village used to be a self-contained economic unit. Its cloth and often the raw material for it, its food-stuff, its fuel and its scanty need of agricultural and industrial implements, together with the rest of the household necessities, used to be produced in the village itself. But in spite of the fact that large-scale machine industry remained almost unknown in India until hardly twenty years ago, the influence of imported machine-made commodities did not leave the Indian village untouched. It is long, since cheap, machine-made commodities began to penetrate further and further into the country, ousting the artisan from his means of livelihood. Modern means of communication have brought the Indian villages closer to the cities, where the machine-made articles are imported from foreign countries. The village trader, to whom the peasant sells the surplus product of his land, brings within the reach of the peasant's slender purse comparatively larger quantities as well as varieties of domestic and ornamental articles made by machinery in some far-off land. The village trader who deals in these imported machine-products, gives the peasant more of such articles as cloth, metal pots and utensils, cutleries, etc. than can the village artisan. Busy trade centres have sprung up along the railways and the river steamship routes, where the peasant can dispose of his product for ready money and can buy cheaply those necessities of life for which he formerly used to depend on the village artisan. He sells his cotton, for example, to the exporters or the native mill-owners' agents and buys machine-made cloth cheaply from the local dealer.

Thus the village weaver is being gradually eliminated as an economic factor of the community. And when we take into consideration the fact that the craft of weaving became so widespread and well developed in India for centuries that it could survive the onslaught of machine production, the ultimate undermining of the weaver may be looked upon as the death of the rural artisan class. The same process of elimination is going on in all other craft industries; as the transportation by bullock cart has been greatly replaced by railways, the once prosperous industries of wheel-wright and cartwright have been ruined. Such has also been the fate of boat-making industries, owing to the fact that an increasing bulk of the water-traffic is carried in river steamers or steam-launches owned by big river navigation companies. The village leather worker is disappearing under the competition of organized industries.

In short, the economic position of that portion of the rural population which has for centuries been engaged in non-agricultural pursuits, has changed. The village artisan finds it more and more impossible to earn a living by his craft. This being the case, a great bulk of the artisan class is thrown out of occupation. And since the population which earned a living by handicrafts was to be counted by tens of millions in India and also on account of the fact that the large-scale machine industry of the country has been and still is too small to absorb an appreciable portion of these displaced artisans, the latter had to turn either towards the land, which was already over-crowded, or to stick to their bankrupt professions in order to eke out a miserable living. There is still to be found a large population in the rural districts engaged in handicrafts, but its economic condition is absolutely hopeless. If these unfortunate people are still sticking to the occupations which cannot prevent death from starvation, it is not because they are too fond of these ancestral pursuits to abandon them, but because all other ways of earning their livelihood are blocked. According to the census report of 1911, no less than 25,000,000 of the rural population were engaged in handicrafts, a third of which number belonged to the weaving industry. The increasing influx of machine-made cotton cloth, not only foreign but Indian manufactured as well, has thrown a considerable part of these people out of their calling. The actual number thus displaced is hard to be ascertained, as the census figures of 1920–21 are not available. But in the words of the Industrial Commission (1916–18): 'The extended use of cotton cloth of native and foreign manufacture by the poorer classes has very prejudicially affected the communities of weavers scattered over the country.'

While the economic position of the rural artisan has become desperate, that of the trader on the contrary, is improving. The same agency, that is, the imported manufactured articles, which has undermined the social foundation of the handicraft industry, has at the same time been a cause of prosperity for the trading class. The most powerful man in the rural districts of India today is the trader, who is at the same time the usurer and in many cases happens to be the person, who, by virtue of the liquid capital he is in possession of, speculates in the small-holdings of the cultivator. The Indian peasant is entirely under the thumb of the country trader, who not only lends him money at an exorbitant rate of interest, but who controls practically the entire economic life of the country-side. He loans, sells and purchases seeds and grains, besides dealing in cloth, salt, oil, utensils, drugs and other household articles no longer produced in the village but imported from outside. The position of a village farmer with grains, oil-seeds or cotton to sell, but at the same time heavily indebted to the village trader, his only customer, makes the former a helpless victim of the latter. Thus this rural trading-class is looked upon by both the peasant and the ruined artisan as the cause of their misery. The peasant thinks so because the grip of the trader-usurer is becoming tighter on his throat every day, while the artisan is deprived of his living by the import of cheap machine-made commodities. The country dealer, possessing traders' and usurers' capital, sucks the blood of the peasantry on the one hand, and as representative of industrial capital on the other, has ruined the artisan class.

As in most parts of the country, the production is on a small scale, it is practically impossible for the farmer to take his product to the larger markets where he can get a better price. But there is another factor which deprives the peasant of the right of selling his crops in the open market. It is again the trader engaged in usury. He loans the cultivator money either in cash or in seed grains in exchange for a mortgage on the prospective harvest. Naturally he imposes his own terms. Thus bound down, the farmer loses the right of even removing his crops from the field before the claims of the usurer as well as that of the big holder or the government (as the case may be) are satisfied. The disastrous effects of this system will be dealt with extensively in its proper place, but it is evident from what is said that the trading class is the master of the rural districts.

In 1911 the number of people living on trade was 17,800,000. Of this a considerable part belonged to the urban population, but no less than 70 per cent could be classed among the rural traders. It is through the agency of this comparatively small section of the people that the most outlying parts of the country were brought within the orbit of capitalist exploitation. The rural trading class of India, obstructed in its normal growth as the pioneer of the future native bourgeoisie, has proved itself a very efficient instrument for extensive and intensive exploitation in the hand of foreign capital. It is through the medium of this class that the peasantry, in spite of being largely engaged in very backward methods of land culture, has been reduced to becoming victims of capitalist exploitation. In the person of the village trader, the agent of the big export firms is to be found in almost every corner of the country. These agents have elaborated a system of taking away by far the greater volume of the produce of the soil in exchange for cheap machine-made commodities, a considerable portion of which consists of domestic necessities and worthless ornaments, thus leaving the peasant starving and submerged in debt for the rest of his life. The crops on the field are sold to the large capitalist concerns before they are harvested or often before they are sown.

On account of the influence of capitalist commerce exercised over agriculture, which still remains the basic industry of India, its social significance has undergone a radical change thanks to the mediation of the rural trader. The value of the agricultural production of the country is no longer determined alone by its capacity to feed the population, but also, and to an ever-increasing degree, by its usefulness to serve as raw materials for modern industries. Or in other words, the rural population of India, though apparently untouched by modern means of production, is no longer left to produce what it needs for its own maintenance; the land tilled by the Indian peasant has to produce what is needed for the machines somewhere else. The productive power of the land and of those who toil on it has been drawn into the orbit of the capitalist system. In short, the rural population of India has been, to all intents and purposes, reduced to capitalist exploitation, without having in appreciable degree its standard of living raised and mode of production revolutionized, as would have been the case under normal circumstances.

The cultivation of the soil in India, although to a great extent still backward, is being adapted more and more to the exigencies of trade and industry than to the primal necessity of feeding the cultivator and his family. In form, agriculture still remains almost the same as a century ago, but its social character has been modernized. In this peculiar phenomenon lies the cause which is going to determine the economic and political movement among the rural population of India. Thus we find an increasing degree of local specialization of particular crops, especially in those grown for export or for supplying the necessities of the modern industrial centres of the country. For example, cotton is no longer grown in small patches in almost every village, but it is concentrated in areas specially adapted for it. In the irrigated dry plains of the Punjab, United Provinces and Sindh, the growing of edibles like wheat, sugarcane, etc., is declining gradually, owing to the inability of the peasantry to meet the excessive rate of taxation and various kinds of rents imposed on these lands in return for the improvement made by artificial irrigation. In place of food-crops, the cultivation of long-staple cotton has been introduced, because on account of its superior commercial value, cotton enables the peasant to meet his increased liabilities. On the irrigated low lands of Madras, cotton, groundnuts and other oil-seeds which are in great demand in the export market, are replacing the staple food crops. In Central provinces, sugarcane is being ousted by cotton, which is readily exchanged for cash, with which the cultivator can buy the cheap imported sugar without taking the trouble of manufacturing it by his crude methods. The great fertile delta of the Ganges, which produces nearly one-fourth of the entire rice of the world, is rapidly coming under the cultivation of jute at the expense of the grain which is the staple of the province as well as of a great portion of the country. The reason is that the poor and indebted peasantry can realize cash immediately after the harvest from jute, and as a rule receive advances in money in order to meet the cost of sowing by mortgaging the coming harvest to the agents of the exporter or manufacturer, who are to be found even in the remotest villages. Instances are not rare in which the cultivator is found to be so hopelessly at the mercy of the local dealer or exporter's agent, that he has to part with his rice crop from the very field and to go hungry all the year round, or to buy what is left after the choice grains have been exported, at a price often several times more than he has received for his crop. And this bad purchase he can make only by mortgaging his land-holding or by selling his cattle or plough.

Thus we find not only the peasant ground down to abject poverty, but the economic life of the Indian village in rapid process of transformation. Owing to the demand for raw materials in the industrial centres outside as well as inside the country, the kind of crops raised is undergoing a change and the method of marketing is altogether different from what it used to be before. The peasant can by no means be called the owner of the product of his soil and toil. His labour power has been socialized in the sense that he is no longer allowed to enjoy the product of it, as well as that it is employed, not in order to satisfy the hunger of himself and his family, but for supplying the commercial and industrial needs of somebody else. The entire agricultural industry of India, in spite of its backward state, has also been socialized, in so far as its scope is no longer limited to producing food for the toiler, and the value of its products is determined more by their exchangeability for other commodities than by their intrinsic character as articles of consumption.

Now we turn to examine the deplorable economic condition of the agricultural population of India as well as the causes which underlie it. Above has been given a general picture of the rural population, with special reference to the ruined state of the non-agricultural class, that is, the artisans and craftsmen. The new tendencies and the deep changes in the economic life of the rural population, agricultural as well as industrial, have also been surveyed. But all the changes, cross-currents and upheavals in the rural population can be estimated according to their proper magnitude and character, only by a thorough knowledge of the economic condition of that bulk of humanity engaged in agriculture, the basic industry of the country.

In 1911 the number of people living on the cultivation of the surface of earth and pasture was 224,000,000, that is more than 70 per cent of the entire population. Of these 8,500,000 lived on agricultural rent, taking no part in actual production; they belonged to the landholding class. Therefore the number of people engaged in agricultural production and living on it along with that of the allied industries was 215,500,000. This bulk of population can be divided into three sections according to their relative economic status. Owing to the absence of any reliable material, it is very hard to make this classification accurate, but in broad lines it is as follows:

1. Peasant proprietors, not in the sense of owning the land they cultivate, but that their holdings are large enough to leave to them a certain surplus to sell after having satisfied their needs.
2. Small farmers, living partly on the produce of the land held on rent and partly on wages.
3. Land workers living exclusively on wages.

Besides these three main classes, a population of about 7,000,000 live on cattle and on other stock-raising.

In 1920 the total population of India rose to 320,000,000 and the area under cultivation of food as well as non-food crops amounted to 291,000,000 acres in the same year. Thus the average cultivated area per head of the population was a little above nine-tenth of an acre. But the actual distribution of the cultivated land was as follows: Deducting the 8,500,000 living on agricultural rent, and 7,000,000 dependent on stock-raising, fishing and hunting, the aggregate number of people subsisting exclusively on agriculture amounts to 208,000,000 of which 41,000,000 are land workers living exclusively on their wages without owning or holding any land. Thus we have in round numbers 167,000,000 people belonging to the first two classes of the agricultural population, namely peasant proprietors and small farmers. Large-scale farming is practically unknown in India. In spite of the fact that there is a rapid process of concentration in landholdings, the capitalists, rich intellectuals, traders and land-speculators, in whose hands the holdings are being concentrated, are not given to agriculture. Except in certain cases, for example, tea, indigo, coffee, partly groundnuts and other oilseeds, the tendency of the Indian bourgeoisie is to invest its capital not in agriculture, but in land. Of late this tendency has been showing signs of decline, and capitalistic production is being introduced into agriculture, especially in the cultivation of cotton, sugar, oilseeds, and such other non-food crops which are in growing demand as raw materials in the new industries of the country. But on the whole, practically the entire cultivated area of the country is held on rent under various systems of land tenures, by the first two classes of the agricultural population. The number of these two classes is 167,000,000 including women, children and dependents. This number is divided among 28,000,000 families, averaging six members. About 5,000,000 of these families can be put in the first class (peasant proprietors), and the other 23,000,000 in the second (small farmers). The average holding of the first category amounts to about 20 acres and that of the second to about 8 acres per family. Information available about the average holding per family of cultivators and the difference between the holdings of the two classes is very scanty and unreliable. The size of the holding varies from one province to the other. The tenant's holding per family goes as low as 2.8 acres in the Punjab while that of the big farmers goes as high as 59 acres in Bengal.

Of the 42,000,000 people living on agricultural wages 25,800,000 are actual workers, men and women included, the former being 13,100,000 and the latter 12,700,000. The rest are evidently children and infirm dependents. A considerable portion of the land workers are employed by the peasant proprietors and big landowners cultivating a part of their field directly, that is, not renting it out to the tenants. A small number of the field workers is also employed by the petty farmers in the sowing and harvest seasons. These land workers can be called agricultural proletariat, in every sense of the word. Their economic position is much worse than that of the pauperized peasantry, being that of wage-earners pure and simple. The classified figures of the 1920 census are not yet available, but according to semi-official reports and other sources of information, the number of field workers living exclusively on wages has increased by 60 per cent in the last ten years, causing a decrease of about 40 per cent in the petty peasantry and small landholders. This increase in the number of land workers is due on the one hand to the tremendous rise in the cost of living, forcing women and young people into manual labour, and on the other, to the rapid process of land concentration caused by the growing indebtedness of the petty peasantry.

This huge mass of agricultural workers is a deadweight on the rural population of India. It came into existence not by the process of the economic evolution of society as in the European countries; it was created by the destruction of the native craft industries, which till the earlier decades of the 19th century employed 25 per cent of the entire population of the country. Craft industries, which supplied the means of livelihood to such a considerable portion of the people, was ruined as stated before, not by the growth in the country of a higher form of production, machine industry, but partly by violent methods and partly by the introduction of machine-products imported from a foreign country. Thus by the thirties of the last century, nearly half a million families of artisans were thrown out of work completely. As the normal industrial development of the country was obstructed artificially in order to preserve the monopoly of a foreign capitalist class on the Indian market, this huge mass of rural population dislodged from its occupation by machine production, could not be turned into a city proletariat in the same manner as in European lands. A great part of it was driven back to the land which had already been supporting too many people, and consequently crowded others out. Thus came into existence the large rural population living on agricultural wages. The number of these field workers has constantly been augmented from the small farmers overwhelmed by indebtedness on one side and on the other, from the village artisans ruined by the steady penetration of cheap, imported machine-made articles into the farthest interior of the country.

The condition of these field workers is very bad. At least six months in the year they are without work or are employed very irregularly. Since nearly two-thirds of the entire cropped area of the country is cultivated by small farmers holding on an average 8 acres per family of six (at the minimum) and since the distribution of the greater part of the remaining one-third (about 100,000,000 acres out of 106,000,000) is also so sub-divided as to preclude the employment of any considerable number of hired labourers, the possibility of this large mass of field workers being absorbed into the agricultural industry is very limited. The peasant proprietors (that is, the farmers holding on an average 20 acres per family) cannot employ a very large portion of the agricultural workers, and these only in the season of seeding and harvesting. The area covered by large-scale farms is hardly 6,000,000 acres, and this is the only place where a steady employment is provided for the field workers; but no more than a couple of millions can be provided for them, under the best circumstances.

This being the case, the field workers of India constitute what is called the floating population. Not having a place where they can be steadily employed, these toilers wander over the country in large masses in search of employment. According to the climatic conditions and those of the soil, different crops are sown and harvested in different parts of the country in different parts of the years. Crops like rice, which need speedy seeding, transplanting as well as harvesting in short spaces of time, supply work to a great bulk of these land workers; but the total duration of this employment does not last more than two months a year. The average wages of the field worker is hardly 8 pence during the working period; thus if the whole year, including the unemployed months, are taken into consideration, the amount dwindles down to 3 or 4 pence a day. The agricultural wages have gone up during the last two years by 20 per cent while the rise in the cost of living has been over 400 per cent.

Along with the change in its industrial policy, the Government of India has recently been adopting measures to improve the agriculture as well. The object is the same, namely to increase the agricultural productivity of the country. The only way of achieving this end is the introduction of modern methods of cultivation by using machinery. But the smallness of the average holding of the farmer is a great obstacle to the use of machinery. A free transfer of the agricultural industry from the present system of small-scale individual production to large-scale capitalistic production, entails the necessity of driving an increasing percentage of the rural population to wage-slavery, because large farms can only come into existence by depriving the small peasants of the petty holdings to which they cling, although starving perpetually. Thus the scheme of increasing the productivity of the land by introducing improved methods would swell the wealth produced by the agricultural industry, but the economic condition of the population living on small holdings or field labour would grow worse in proportion, since the introduction of improved methods will drive the small farmers off the land and increase the number of rural wage-earners. But the growing use of labour-saving machineries in agriculture will deprive the field workers of employment, thus accentuating their present precarious plight. This problem seems to be taken into consideration by the government in its new economic policy, even if the political movement of the bourgeois intellectuals still remains oblivious to such vital questions of social-economics. The British rulers appear to appreciate the grave danger of the existence of an ever-growing mass of unemployed and unemployables in the country. In recommending that the Government should encourage and help the introduction of machinery in agriculture, the Industrial Commission (1916–18) remarks: 'It is clear that if the basis of employment also be widened, crop failures will lose much of the severity of their effects, and the extension of industries, in as great a variety as circumstances will permit, will do more than anything to secure the economic stability of the labouring-classes.'

Of course this view of 'securing the economic stability of the labouring-classes' is taken from the exploiters' angle of vision and adapted to their interests. While the occasional crop failures have their effects on the economic condition of the people, it is only the theory of capitalist imperialism which ascribes to crop failures the entire responsibility for the havocs wrought by the famines in India. The same Industrial Commission admits in another part of its report: 'Famine now connotes not so much a scarcity or entire absence of food, as high prices and a lack of employment in the affected areas'. It also testifies to the fact that 'the development of irrigation and the improvement of agriculture enable the country to grow a much larger quantity of food-stuffs than before.'

The secret of the misery of the rural population lies in the fact that the agricultural production of India has been brought completely within the sphere of capitalist exploitation, foreign and native combined. The unrestricted export of foodgrains, together with the merciless speculation carried on by the native traders, raises the price continually on the one hand, while on the other, the lack of employment among an ever-growing section of the rural population creates great scarcity of money. So, even when there is food the people die of hunger because they have no money to buy it with.

In the province of Madras, the use of machinery in agriculture has been more than in any other part. As a result the productivity has increased, especially of the land under oilseeds; but the other side of the picture shows a great decrease in the number of unemployed* field workers.

Finding it impossible to absorb this mass of unemployables within the country, a large number of these had to be sent out to earn a living somewhere else. The rubber plantations of the Malay States provided a field. The emigrant workers have been helpless victims of the same class of native traders who found it profitable to speculate in human labour. In the last years, the slump in the rubber market has thrown hundreds of thousands of these plantation workers out of their employment.

So it is evident that the problem of finding employment for the growing mass of field workers can be solved neither by the capitalist method of increasing production by the use of labour-saving machineries, nor by the bourgeois nationalist programme of conferring on the big land-holding capitalist class the right of ownership, thus exempting it from the liability of paying augmented taxes to the Government, nor by the petty-bourgeois liberal reformism which prescribes the abolition of large holdings and leaves the basic industry of the country in the hands of the small farmers. We will be better able to formulate our solution after having analysed the system of land tenures as well as the economic condition of the first two sections of the rural population, namely peasant proprietors and small farmers.

In India the ownership of the soil, both cultivated and uncultivated, is vested in the State. The land tenure is divided into two classes, namely Zemindary system and Ryotwari system. The former again is divided into two categories, permanent and temporary. The system of land settlement that prevails in India is based on the imported idea of English feudal aristocracy mixed with the native tradition of peasants owning the land and paying the State tribute through the medium of a class of tax-collectors. Of course, none of those old basic ideas can be found in toto in the present systems of land tenure; but the latter is the development of the two old systems adapted to the modern necessities of capitalist exploitation.

Under the first system of tenure, that is the Zemindari system, the land revenue is assessed by the State permanently or temporarily as the case may be, on individual families holding large estates and occupying a position analogous to that of a landlord. These holders in their turn lease out small parcels of their estates to tenants who cultivate the land. When the revenue is assessed directly by the State on small holdings occupied and cultivated by the peasant, the tenure is called Ryotwari. The second class of tenure is always temporary.

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* Most likely a printing error in the 1922 edition since in the context the correct word would be 'employed'. S.N.R.

In order to understand clearly the agrarian problem of India and the economic condition of the population engaged exclusively and living on cultivation of the earth, it is necessary to go into the history of the development of tenure, distribution and taxation of land. When in the middle of the 18th century the British East India Company assumed the political control over the province of Bengal, the ryot or cultivator had been in the habit of paying a fixed share of produce either in kind or cash, to the large land-holders called the Zemindars. Under the Mughal Empire, these Zemindars paid to the central government nine-tenths of what they received from the cultivator, retaining one-tenth for themselves. Besides, they had the right to assess additional local cesses which entirely fell to their share. At the time of the Emperor Akbar was introduced the custom of renewing assessment on the holding of the landlords every ten years. Nominally, the landlords held their estates under mandates from the Emperor, in return for meritorious services rendered. The right of collecting revenue passed on to the heir after the death of the Zemindar, on the former's paying the Emperor a gift or fine. With the decline of the Mughal power the well-regulated feudal land-laws introduced by Akbar ceased to function, and chaos and anarchy in land taxation as well as administration was the order of the day, when the British became the supreme political rulers of the country. In its first attempt at revenue administration, the Company adopted the prevailing custom of annual assessment; according to this system, the right of collecting rent was sold annually to the highest bidder, that is, to the person who could guarantee the government the greatest amount of revenue from the land. The result of this method of collecting the largest amount of revenue was disastrous. The Company's government was satisfied with receiving from the landholders the guaranteed amount, without minding the methods employed in collecting it as well as the share that the collector chose to take for his own. Between the government and the people there came into existence a class of tax-farmers, who by their very economic position were not at all interested in the actual agriculture, but only in getting as much as possible from the cultivator. Knowing that the holding might pass away from his hand the next year, the tax-farmer's philosophy was to make hay while the sun was shining. Consequently, the peasantry was ruined, agriculture was largely abandoned, and the amount extracted from the cultivator even by the most merciless procedure, diminished. It was not long before the Company came to understand the wrong economics of the system.

The British East India Company, in its character as the representative of trading capital, naturally desired to exterminate the Indian feudal land-tenure, in order to bring the producing forces within territories occupied by it under its own direct exploitation. The procedure of leasing out gradually the right of collecting land revenue ruined the hereditary landowner families. In a short space of time, the former hereditary right of collecting land revenue passed away from the ancient feudal families into the hands of a new class of leaseholders and tax-farmers, who were at the same time officials, traders and usurers. But this fundamental change in social economics alarmed the British Parliament, which in those days (1777–80) still greatly reflected the political views of the English landed aristocracy. True to its feudal traditions, which were not dead as yet, the British Parliament could not watch idly the peaceful passing off of its peers in India. Accordingly it was enacted in 1784 that 'whereas diverse Rajas, Zemindars, Polygars, Talookdars, and other native landholders within the British territories in India, have been unjustly deprived of, or compelled to abandon or relinquish, their respective Indian Jurisdictions, Rights and Privileges, the Court of Directors should take measures for establishing, upon principles of Moderation and Justice, the Permanent Rules by which their respective Tributes, Rents, and Services shall be in future rendered and paid to said United Company by the said Rajas, Zemindars, etc.' Thus we find the struggle of the two philosophies of the social economics of the England of those times, namely the reactionary tendency of the landed aristocracy to cling to the undermined feudalism, and the bourgeois mission of freeing the peasantry for unfettered exploitation by capital, reflected in the administration of India in the earlier days of British domination. The disastrous effects on revenue as a result of the system of annual assessment, together with the opposition raised by the British Parliament against the destruction of the Indian feudal families, thrust upon the Company's government the necessity of reforming its land policy. The political power wielded by the British rulers in those days was not sufficient to enable them to assume the task of bringing the entire population under the exploitation of trades capital, without some native intermediary. Nor were the English invaders numerically strong enough to undertake the task of collecting the land tax directly from the cultivators. Therefore, it was resolved to create out of the new revenue collecting class, a class of landholders. Being originally a class of usurers, traders and land speculators, this new landholding element could be counted upon as the social basis of the foreign rule.

The reformed land tenure was introduced as an experiment in

1789 in the form of a Ten Years' Settlement. It was a reversal to the old system of Akbar. This policy of reviving the dead landlordism, although in a modernized form, was inaugurated under the auspices of Cornwallis, that champion of the British landed aristocracy, who had but a few years before met his defeat at the hands of the rebellious colonial bourgeoisie at Yorktown. The experiment was found to be satisfactory to all concerned; the income of the government was stabilized, a loyal supporter was found in the contented class of newly-created landholders, and the agricultural production was increased, the peasantry having been saved somewhat from the ravenous exploitation of the irresponsible tax-farmers. On the expiration of the experimental period, Cornwallis reported that the new system had worked very satisfactorily and recommended that the next assessment should be made in perpetuity. Consequently, the entire cultivated area of the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa was assessed permanently, the Government's share in the revenue being fixed at 90% of the whole economic rent. This is known as the Permanent Settlement of 1793. The effect of this settlement was that a permanent landholding class living on agricultural rent was created out of the tax-farmers, or in other words, those who had been collectors of revenue became practically the owners of their leaseholds, while the cultivators, who had been the owners of the soil they tilled, became tenants at the mercy of the Zemindars, who soon began to burden them with rack-rent.

The Permanent Settlement of 1793, which is looked upon even by the Indian Nationalists as one bright spot in the history of British rule, and for the general extension of which all over the country the political leaders have been stoutly fighting during more than half a century, has been the most sinister event in the annals of modern India. It checked the growth of the Indian bourgeoisie in its infancy and diverted it into a wrong way. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, there came into existence in India a prosperous trading class with a considerable capital accumulated in its hands. This trading class was largely responsible for undermining the foundation of feudalism in the days of decay of the Mughal Empire. All the big landowners as well as the rulers of the various independent states that sprang up on the ruins of the Mughal Empire, were heavily indebted to this class of usurious traders. The land was rapidly passing out of the hands of the hereditary feudal owners into the control of usury and trades capital. The latter was interested in seeing more people engaged in industries than in agriculture. In the middle of the eighteenth century in the province of Bengal alone, there were several million people employed in one industry—that of cotton-spinning and weaving. There were textile factories employing more than 100 workers. Woven cotton cloth formed a considerable part of the commodities exported from India by the East India Company, even towards the end of the eighteenth century. So this class of traders was the advance guard of the coming Indian bourgeoisie and would have developed into the modern capitalist class had not its normal growth been obstructed. The representatives of the British bourgeoisie recognized in the Indian traders and land-speculators their rivals, historically destined to compete for the right of monopoly of exploiting the country. In the pious request of the English landed aristocracy assembled in Parliament, not to wipe off landlordism in India, was found a way to side-track the energies of Indian capital. Feudalism as a hereditary element in social economics had already been irretrievably undermined; the land had been freed from feudal fetters. By the Permanent Settlement, the land liberated from feudal ownership was given over to the trading class still in its infancy. Thus the capital and energy of the trading class, which under normal circumstances would have proved to be the forefather of the Indian bourgeoisie, was diverted to the investment on land which offered a promising prospect. In the struggle between two trading classes the less developed one succumbed before the more developed. The Indian traders and usurers were not only prevented from constituting themselves eventually into rivals of the British capital, but were converted into a loyal support of British rule. But the hand of history cannot be kept back for ever. As has been shown in the first part, this very landholding class, created by the British Government for its own benefit, has contributed largely to the rise of the modern intellectual, commercial and industrial bourgeoisie of India. The social forces assert themselves unfailingly.

Of course, by the Permanent Settlement, the absolute ownership of the land was not forfeited by the government. The land was leased out to a number of middlemen at a rate of assessment fixed in perpetuity, who were given the right to collect the revenue on behalf of the State. Thus under the Zemindari system, which is in many respects analogous to landlordism, the land rent in India is not, as in other countries, a tribute paid to the State out of the income of the landowner, but on the contrary, it represents the relinquishment of a portion of the land revenue in favour of the landholders. Or in other words, under the Permanent Settlement the British Government, instead of exacting tribute from the landlords, concedes to them a part of the net rental of land, besides the privilege of sucking the blood of the poor tenants by a thousand and one ways, which will be dealt with presently. The British rulers adopted this method of subsidizing a parasitic class for its own purposes as demonstrated above. But the reactionary character of that wing of the Indian political movement, which demands the extension of this system of tenure over the entire country, is betrayed when we find that under it, it is the small class of landholders that thrives at the cost of the cultivators. Even to the government this system has ceased to be useful, since it has played out its role to divert India's trades capital from industry to land; whereas on the other hand, in the provinces where this system is in force, the government is deprived by this privileged class of a great part of the land-rent. For example, in the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, where the Permanent Settlement was first introduced, the total revenue paid to the government by all the Zemindars taken together is £3,500,000, the sum fixed as 90 per cent of the entire economic rent a century and a quarter ago, while the actual rental has gone up to more than £14,000,000.

The Permanent Zemindari system holds good in five-sixths of the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, one-tenth of the United Provinces and a quarter of the province of Madras,—representing in all about one-fifth of the area of British India. Another 32 per cent of the area of British India is under temporary Zemindari system which allows a new assessment every 20 to 30 years. In the rest of the area, that is 48 per cent, the Ryotwari system is in force. In the Native States the temporary Zemindari system prevails, although a considerable portion of land is under Ryotwari tenure. Accurate figures about the land tenure in the Native States are not available. Though for reasons stated above, in the earlier days of their domination, the British rulers were forced to bring into existence a new class of landholders, after the old feudal landlordism had been destroyed by the development of new social forces,—in course of time, those reasons gradually lost their potentiality. The procedure of collecting land rent through the medium of a privileged class soon proved to be uneconomical. The Permanent Settlement precluded the government from participating in the actual profits of land rent, which kept on increasing owing to the more settled condition of the country. To its discomfiture, the foreign capitalist government found that it had signed away its right of exploiting the agricultural population, in so far as the proceeds from the land rent were concerned, to the new landholding class, which was growing wealthy under the protection of the government. But the British rulers did not think it was yet possible to maintain their power over the vast population and extent of the country without the help of a solid and contented native element. So they did not dare to do away with the Zemindars; but they decided not to concede so much privilege to them in the newly acquired territories. Thus we find the Permanent Settlement in force in those provinces which fell into the hands of the English first, namely Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Madras and the United Provinces. Even in those provinces, the Permanent Settlement was not introduced into those portions which came under British domination subsequently. The new system was Temporary Zemindari tenure. Under this system, the class of intermediary landholders was still retained in order to collect the rent for the government, but the latter reserved the right of enhancing its share in the total economic rent of the land from time to time. The government still needed such a class of landholders in order to avoid the troubles and worry of collecting the revenue. This system prevails in those parts of the country which came under British administration while the British power was not yet well consolidated; that is, in some parts of Bengal and Bihar-Orissa, nine-tenths of the United Provinces, the whole area of the Punjab, four-fifths of the Central Provinces, the entire North-Western Frontier provinces and small tracts of Bombay. As stated above 32 per cent of British India and by far the greater part of the Native States come under Temporary Zemindari system. In British India alone, 195,000,000 acres are held by Zemindars (temporary) and 122,000,000 acres (permanent) of the entire area of 614,000,000 acres.

Under the Temporary Zemindari system, the right of collecting rent in return for a share in it is conferred, in addition to individuals, upon joint villages. The revenue system which treats the village as a unit, and makes a Collective assessment is only applied to the 'joint villages' of the north, that is, in those parts of the country where the old village communities existed at the time of British occupation. For the convenience of collecting revenue, the British Government thought it wise to utilize these communities as economic or proprietary units; the services of the Patwari (the village headman) were found particularly valuable. Theoretically these so-called 'joint villages' are held jointly and severally liable for the revenue charge, local rates etc., the burden of which they distribute among the co-sharers according to the rule and principle of their constitution. But in practice, the Patwari is the supreme power, being the representative of the Government and abusing his authority to such an extent that instances are not rare when he is killed by the villagers.

Now we will proceed to analyse the effects of the Zemindari system, both permanent as well as temporary, on the cultivators. It is held by a great majority of the Nationalists that the Zemindari system, and especially the Permanent Settlement of the Bengal type, is most beneficial to the cultivator, becuase it protects him from the exploitation of the Government. But the facts disprove this opinion, which manifestly is based upon class interest. Under the Zemindari tenure, the tenant suffers more than anybody else. He has absolutely no protection against being rack-rented.

The excesses committed by the Bengal landholders became so flagrant that the Government found it imperative to curtail their power by granting Occupancy Right to the cultivator. By the Bengal Land Act of 1859, the government recognized the right of the tenant holding land since 1793 or for twenty years, to remain in possession of the holding without the Zemindar having the authority to eject him or to enhance his rental without a civil suit. But these guarantees count for very little in the practical life of the cultivator. By the privilege of appropriating a large portion of the entire economic rent, the Zemindars have accumulated considerable wealth; thus they can afford to buy off all the petty judicial, revenue and executive officials on whom rests the task of enforcing the law. And on the other side, the object of the government in enacting such laws was not to safeguard the interests of the toiling class against the landed rich, but to weaken the position of the landholders by posing as the protector of the poor cultivator against the oppressions of the latter. Thus, while in recent years there has always existed growing acrimony between the government and the landholding class over their respective share in the proceeds of exploitation, the position of the peasantry has been getting worse and worse, because both are desirous to extract as much as possible from the cultivator. The fact that the public exchequer receives less revenue from the area under Zemindari system than from the Ryotwari area, that is, the area under direct government assessment, does not by any means substantiate the contention that the cultivator under the former is any better off economically than under the latter. Under the Zemindari tenure, the actual payment, including that made in kind, is much more than the legal rate of rent payable to the landholder. The cultivator pays a fixed rent, assessed at an average of 35 per cent of his net income, plus contributions for the upkeep of the Zemindar's household and rent-collecting staff, the latter being a permanent demand and is considered a part of the tenant's liabilities. The salary of the Zemindar's collectors is £1 per month on the average. This terribly insufficient wage naturally makes the Zemindar's officials extremely corrupt; they exact all kinds of contributions from the tenants under one pretext or another. Most of the rich landholders are absentees, living most of the year in the cities, where their luxurious life is supported by the rent exacted from the peasantry. Thus the cultivator is left entirely at the mercy of the unscrupulous rent-collectors, who at the same time indulge in petty usury. Over and above all these liabilities, which are more or less constant, the peasant has to pay contributions, mostly in kind, for the various religious and other festivals celebrated in the household of the

Zemindar. All these taken together constitute no less than 75 per cent of the net income of his land and labour, which the cultivator has to part with for the benefit of the idle Zemindar. Should the poor peasant refuse to meet all these legal and illegal liabilities, the landlord, who is usually also the usurer and is on friendly terms with the local native officials, finds means of getting him into various complications, which result in his ejection from the holding and ultimate ruin.

The entire cultivated area (56,803,000 acres) of the province of the Punjab is under temporary Zemindari system, the term of every assessment being fixed at twenty years. This province, being one of those parts of the country where modern irrigation has greatly increased the productivity of the soil, is considered as heaven for the cultivator. But when one turns to the actual condition of the people, quite another picture is found. The entire benefit accrued from the improvement of land and the consequent rise in its value goes to the government and to the native tax-farmers. In 1894 it was found by an enquiry that more than 20 per cent of the total cultivated area had been either sold or was heavily encumbered with debt; between 1892 and 1896 more than 50,000 acres had passed from the hands of the small farmers to that of the money lenders and other non-agricultural holders. In the year 1899–1900, 120,000 acres were sold, and the area under mortgage was 300,000 acres. In 15 years (1902–1917) the net increase in the mortgage debt of the province exceeded £10,000,000. Of this nearly 90 per cent falls on the peasant farmers. The real cause of this ruined economic condition of the peasantry is to be looked for neither in the government's contention that the cultivator is improvident, nor in the nationalist theory of the excessive rate of land revenue exacted by the state. It lies in the fact that the comparatively backward agricultural production of India has been reduced to the modern form of capitalist exploitation. It is not the rent with which the present government of India is principally concerned, as was the case with its predecessors; today the source of government income from the land lies in the commercial value of its produce. Thus the peasant's relation with the state or the landlord is not liquidated, as before, by paying a certain portion of the crops; the entire quantity of the product of his land and labour is under the control of capitalist commerce. That land revenue does not constitute the principal factor in the field of economic exploitation of the present Indian state is proved by the following figures which show a gradual diminution in the percentage of it. (Table on p. 230.)

In order to disprove the nationalist contention that the peasantry is becoming impoverished on account of the heavy burden of taxation imposed on the land by the government, the latter points out

	1870	1880	1900	1910	1920
Proportion borne by the land revenue to					
The gross income of the State	39%	29.5%	23%	19%	–
Taxation proper	43%	41.8%	40.8%	38.6%	35%

the fact that in all the provinces where the assessment is subject to periodical revision, it has been the policy of the government to reduce gradually the proportion borne by the assessment to the net assets. For example in the province of Agra the standard of assessment was reduced from 90 per cent in 1812 to 50 per cent in 1885, the percentage having been lowered considerably since then; in the province of Orissa the reduction was from 83.3 per cent in 1882 to 54 per cent in 1900 and the present rate is below 50 per cent. But this decrease does not actually affect the total revenue; on the contrary, the amount of income to the public exchequer from land revenue has increased.

The development of the land revenue of British India since the revolution of 1857 is shown by the following figures:

			Rupees
1856–57	. . .	. . .	173,000,000
1870–71	. . .	. . .	199,000,000
1880–81	. . .	. . .	219,000,000
1890–91	. . .	. . .	240,000,000
1900–01	. . .	. . .	262,000,000
1910–11	. . .	. . .	317,000,000
1920–21	. . .	. . .	351,000,000

Territorial expansion of any fiscal importance during this period was the acquisition of Upper Burmah in 1886. Thus the extension of cultivation, resulting in larger production and rise of prices may be held responsible for this substantial increase in the total land revenue. Today, in actual land rent, the Indian peasant pays less in proportion to the gross produce of his land than before, but the amount he pays is more than he used to pay formerly, because the part left to him has ceased to be his property in the sense it used to be. The commercial value of the entire agricultural production is of much more importance to the present capitalist government than the rent on the land. This is equally the case with the landholders, the majority of whom look upon land not in the same spirit as their feudal predecessors used to, but rather as a profitable means of investing their capital. The difference between the economic outlook of the government and that of the landholding class is this; while the former, being the political apparatus of a foreign bourgeoisie, completely conscious of its interest, is desirous of increasing the productivity of the land, the latter, having its capital invested in the land, tries to recover the greatest amount possible in rent and interest. Thus it is but natural, looked at from the point of view that the two exploiting factors represent two categories of capital, one more advanced and more conscious than the other—that the common victim, that is, the cultivator, should be exploited in different ways. That is why we find the peasants in those parts of the country directly assessed by the government superficially more prosperous than their fellows living under Zemindari tenures.

The government's policy is to let the peasant toil on his land with the least encumbrance possible in order that at the end of each year there may be an increase in the total production, since the greater the productivity of the land and labour of the country, the more profit accrues to the capitalist class, whose representative is the government. But agriculture in India being still very backward, there is a limit to the increase in its production. Therefore the insufficient agricultural production of the country has been brought under intensive capitalistic exploitation, thus throwing the peasantry into a state of hopeless and perpetual poverty. The grip of the moneylender is becoming tighter and tighter every day. In order to bring the product of the cultivator's labour freely into the open market of capitalist commerce, the government would like to do away with the intermediary of the native trader and moneylender; but it cannot be done, the latter have become an integral part of the structure of the exploiting apparatus.

Twenty years ago the province of the Punjab found itself in an agrarian crisis. The moneylender was the master of the situation, being in alliance with the Zemindar. The cultivator was losing his hold upon the land. The cultivated area redeemed was always less than the area newly mortgaged. At last in 1901 the government found it necessary to turn its back on the tax-farming barons and take up the cause of the peasantry. The Zemindars were a convenient class to have in order to save the government the troubles and worries of collecting the rent, and to be relied upon in case of emergency; but as soon as they constituted a fetter on production, bourgeois economic theories of the freedom of the peasantry and the security of its tenancy were turned against the once useful class. Thus was passed, to the great discomfiture of the Zemindars and in the face of strong opposition from the camp of the nationalists, the Land Alienation Act. By this legislation, the cultivator was given the right of occupancy on the land, that is, the landholder could no longer enhance the rate of rent arbitrarily. Formerly it had been well nigh impossible for the cultivator to hold on to the same piece of land for any length of time. Unless the peasant was secure on his holding, he could not be expected to work hard on it and increase its productivity. The cultivator was freed from the vagaries of the Zemindar in order to be more intensively exploited by the capitalist government and the native trading class. Under the old system of tenure, the Punjab peasantry was inextricably in the grip of the usurer, who used to lend him money to pay the exactions of the Zemindar. The land was rapidly being transferred from the hand of the agricultural to that of the non-agricultural class. It was ceasing to be a source of production and becoming a medium of speculation. The result of this process was a fall in production, therefore the government, controlled by a foreign bourgeoisie, found it imperative to 'protect' the cultivator. But so long as the accumulated wealth of a certain class of the native population finds its way to higher forms of investment blocked, it must follow speculative and usurious pursuits. If it is prevented from speculating on land rent, it speculates on agricultural products; and the government being interested in complete commercialization of the product of the land, needs the services of the native trading class. Thus we find the peasant still in the grip of the usurer, even after he has been secured on his land, somewhat immune from the exactions of the Zemindar.

The secret of the incurable misery of the Indian peasantry lies in the fact that it is being ground between two mill-stones, viz., foreign capital in a higher stage of development and the native capital in a lower stage. In the field of exploitation, the two depend upon each other, while at the same time, owing to the very historic inevitability of the evolution of capitalism, they cannot help clashing with each other. When they depend on each other, the native traders bring the farmer directly under the commercial exploitation of the foreign bourgeoisie; when they conflict with each other, it is again the peasantry which perishes in the clash.

As stated before, the average holding of the Indian cultivator is so small that it is very hard for him to subsist on its produce. When, under the Zemindari system, a greater part of the produce is taken away from him in the form of rent, interest and contribution, he has to starve because what is left to him is too insufficient. On the other hand when, under the benign protection of the capitalist government, the relative amount of the various kinds of direct taxation to be borne by him is reduced, the portion of his produce spared him may be somewhat more, but the prices of other necessities have already gone up and he finds himself in the clutches of the trader. Such being the case, a great majority of the rural population live on the verge of starvation all their life. Not being able to sustain himself and his family on the produce of his small holding, the petty peasant sinks into indebtedness, which goes on increasing till he is thrown off his land, no matter what sort of tenure he theoretically enjoys. The existence of a considerable amount of capital invested in land is forcing its rapid concentration in the hands of the non-agricultural class. The registration of Land Records shows a growth in the cases of land transfers. In the year 1918–19 no less than 994,000 holdings changed hands, involving 4,676,000 acres. The figures available about the cases of land transfer are very incomplete. The Statistical Reports of the government on this subject do not embrace three entire provinces, viz., Bengal, Madras and Bihar and Orissa; no informations are available about the number of transfers executed through the Civil Courts, and it is stated in the official statistics that the figures contained in the official reports are also incomplete. Thus we can put the number of transfers at three or four times above that indicated. Or in other words, an average of about 20,000,000 acres of cultivated land is passing on to the control of non-agriculturists annually. Therefore, to that extent, agriculture in India is ceasing to be determined by the village economy of the petty peasantry.

This transfer of land from the cultivators to the land speculators is gravely affecting the production of the country. We call this class, in whose hand the land is being concentrated, 'speculators', because they invest their capital not in agriculture, but in land. The method of cultivating the land thus concentrated is not modernized; capitalist large-scale production is not being introduced in the place of small-scale individual production. Thus we find an increase of 50 per cent in the land lying fallow in British India in 1917–18 and the proportion increased to 62 per cent in the year following. The cause is the growing pauperization of the small farmers, who are abandoning their land because they find it impossible to eke out a living on it. The government is naturally alarmed at the fall of production resulting from this diminution in the area cultivated. Therefore it is adopting a 'forward policy' in agriculture as well as in industry. It does not find any other solution of this grave problem than to hand over the agricultural industry to the capitalists, who have so far been speculating in land and the limited product of primitive agriculture. 'To encourage the introduction of modern machinery in agriculture' is the new policy of the government. Considering the fact that machinery cannot be used economically while agriculture continues on the prevailing small-holding system, the corollary of this new policy inevitably must be the wholesale expropriation of the small farmers. The consequence of this will be the enrichment of the landholding and money-lending class which has a surplus capital to avail itself of this new policy, and a tremendous increase in the mass of rural population living on agricultural wages. And since there already exists a great scarcity of employment for the field workers, the misery of the land proletariat can be easily imagined when their number will be greatly augmented by the introduction of labour-saving machineries in agriculture on one hand, and by depriving small farmers of their land holding on the other, the two inevitable results of large-scale farming.

Though the cultivator living under the Zemindari system is so much exploited by the idle class of modern land-barons in some provinces and by capitalist tax-farmers in others, the economic condition of the Ryotwari tenants cannot be called in any way better. Under the Zemindari system, specially the permanent type of Bengal, the rate of rent legally paid by the cultivator is often less than that borne by his fellow living on Ryotwari tenures. But this advantage is more than out-balanced by innumerable other contributions having their origin in the tradition of feudalism, long dead and gone as an economic force. The Zemindari tenants are 'protected' by the government with land laws which render the former secure against the excessive exploitation of the landholder. Of course the real object of this protection is to cut into the enviable large income of the rich landholding class, whose continued existence is becoming more and more undesirable, and even prejudicial to free capitalist exploitation of agriculture. Nevertheless, while the Zemindari tenants are 'protected', the cultivators living on Ryotwari land are exploited directly by the government. And, since the capitalist background and consciousness of the British Indian government is much more scientific and developed than that of the native land speculators, landed bourgeoisie and usurers, the exploitation exercised by the former is naturally more efficient and cuts in deeper. The Ryotwari system prevails over 48 per cent of the entire area of British India, and a greater portion of the 32 per cent under Temporary Zemindari system, to all practical purpose, falls under the former. The land under these two kinds of tenure can be said to have been 'nationalised' if the ownership by a state in the hands of a foreign power, can be called nationalisation. This system of government dealing directly with the cultivator is claimed to have been adopted according to the tradition of the country. It is true that in India, historically, land revenue is an economic factor prior to private rent on land. In the pre-British period, the monarchs, both Hindu and Mussalman, used to take directly a share of the produce of the land; this claim was not based on the right to participate in the contributions gathered by the landowning nobility, but directly on the produce of the soil. Thus the revenue idea evolved before that of rent, which all through the pre-British period was theoretically nonexistent. The rent enjoyed by the feudal holders was identical with that portion of revenue relinquished by the Crown in favour of its nobles. The real rent and rent-yielding property in land was introduced into Indian economy by the British. It has been indicated already how the English idea of landed aristocracy was reflected in the Permanent Settlement of Bengal.

The British Government in India being a political apparatus of the bourgeoisie, could not forever stick to the policy of creating a rent-getting landed aristocracy for India. For various reasons pointed out before, especially in those earlier days of the Indian Empire when the British rulers were still closely connected with and were under the political control of the English landowning class, the creation of a class-intermediary between the State owning the land and the peasant cultivating the soil, was found necessary. But the economic policy of the Indian government changed in proportion as the social character of the English bourgeoisie went on changing.

Thus came the time when the Indian government decided to keep to itself (that is to the British bourgeoisie), both the revenue as well as rent from land. The intermediary landholding class appropriating the land-rent was no longer necessary. In order to justify this combined state-landlordism and state-capitalism (in agriculture), the British official revenue experts resort to the history of ancient and medieval India to establish that 'the right of the state to the rent is superior to that of the private holder'.

For all practical economic purposes, the area under Ryotwari tenure and a considerable portion of that temporary Zemindari tenure granted to small holders cultivating the land by themselves with the aid of hired labour, could be called a huge farm. The government, in its character of landowner, receives the rent and in that of capitalist proprietor, is interested in the increase of production, which as social production, belongs to it. Thus the peasants are nominally independent small farmers, but in fact labourers on a huge capitalist farm. The productivity of those tracts directly under government control, has been greatly increased by the introduction of artificial irrigation. But this advantage has been more than out-balanced by new taxations. The average rate of rent on the land actually under cultivation is 2.8 rupees per acre; considering the backwardness of agriculture and the consequent low output as well as the smallness of the average holding of the cultivator, this is a very high incidence. But the actual amount paid by the cultivator in the irrigated tracts is much more than this, taking into account other indirect taxes on land such as cess, contributions for the expenses of guarding the canal zones etc. The actual amount paid goes up to 35 per cent of the net produce. All these liabilities have to be liquidated in cash; consequently the cultivator finds it necessary to sell his crop immediately after the harvest. This forced sale makes it impossible for him to get a fair price. Thus, while on the one hand, the productivity and therefore the value of land is increased, the wealth in possession of the peasantry, on the other hand, is decreased. He toils on his land to sell out his produce at a low price, and has to incur debts in order to obtain the seeds and capital for sowing and cultivating his land the next year. This bankrupt position of the peasantry is greatly helping the commercialization of agriculture. The cultivation of non-food crops is increasing, while that of food-crops is decreasing proportionately. Finding himself under all kinds of liabilities to the government as well as to the moneylender, the peasant is forced to grow the crops in demand for industrial use in preference to food-grains, because the former are sold more readily and at a higher price.

The following table containing the percentage of increase in the area as well as yield of the principal food and non-food crops, shows the change in the agrarian economy of India:

Crops	Unit in 1900	Increase in yield 1919	Increase in area 1919
Rice	100	50%	50%
Wheat	100	50%	30%
Cotton	100	100%	90%
Jute	100	70%	60%
Oil Seeds	100	105%	60%
Tea	100	200%	55%

The output of rice, the staple food of the larger part of the population, has never been in excess of the needs during the last six years; but in 1919–20 there was a striking expansion in the shipment of non-food articles like cotton (both raw and manufactured), jute (raw and manufactured), oil seeds, tea etc. The value of foodgrains exported in 1919–20 was £7,200,000 in excess of that of 1913–14, whereas the value of non-food agricultural products exported was £60,610,000 more. In 1909–10 jute and cotton exports had constituted 13 per cent and 10 per cent, while in 1919–20 they were respectively 24 and 19 per cent of the total export.

Taking into consideration the fact that a great bulk of raw materials like jute and cotton is of late consumed in the large-scale industries developing in the country, it is evident that the production of non-food crops must have increased much more than is shown by the rise in export figures. And this increase must have been at the cost of foodgrains, since the increase in the total area under cultivation has not been considerable. In the last two years the movement has been decidedly to the contrary. The total cropped area decreased by 12 per cent and the extent of cultivated land lying fallow increased by 50 per cent. Besides, there is another factor to be taken into consideration, viz., there is a tendency towards decrease in the area under more than one crop a year. Only in one year (1918–19) the decrease was from 37,000,000 acres to 27,000,000 acres. Neither have modern methods of cultivation been introduced in the area under non-food crops, to any appreciable extent. Therefore, obviously, the proportion of land under non-food crops needed for industrial purposes in India as well as in foreign countries, is increasing and that under food crops conversely, is decreasing.

From this movement of crops it is evident that the agricultural industry, on which by far the greater part of the rural population of India depends, is ceasing to be determined by the needs of the cultivators themselves; it is becoming commercialized, and has become so to a great extent already. Capitalist industry and commerce, British as well as native, have in their hands the control of Indian agriculture. Or in other words, the Indian peasant is the victim of capitalist exploitation, and is becoming more so every day. The big landholder, small tax-farmer, moneylender, country-trader, land-speculator, liberal intellectual with his capital invested in land, as well as the government, under whose collective and several economic pressures the Indian peasant is reduced to a state of abject and chronic poverty, are consciously or unconsciously all parts of one and the same structure of capitalist exploitation which holds the country in its hand.

A study of the production and export of agricultural commodities in India will give a further insight into the economic condition of the rural population. It will also show that the exchange value of the produce of the comparatively backward and seemingly individualistic agriculture of the country, has become predominant over its use-value. Let us begin by giving a summary of the total agricultural production in amount as well as in price, of the last year (1919–20).

In comparison with the pre-war standard, the price of food-stuffs has gone up by 76 per cent wholesale and 400 per cent retail. If the cultivator had been the owner of his produce after having liquidated all his legal liabilities in revenue, rents, and taxes, he would be in a rather prosperous position today, since 90 per cent of the food consumed in India is produced in the country. The following figures

TOTAL AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION
1919–20

Articles		Amount	Price
Rice	Tons	33,956,000	£684,552,960
Wheat	Tons	10,297,000	209,244,280
Sugar	Tons	3,000,000	80,096,800
Tea	Lbs	337,055,600	18,527,780
Cotton in bales of 400	Lbs	480,000	342,063,000
Jute in bales of 400	Lbs	8,482,000	101,790,360
Linseed	Tons	430,000	13,826,680
Rape and Mustard seed	Tons	1,200,000	37,296,000
Sesamum	Tons	614,000	24,558,000
Ground Nuts	Tons	800,000	10,200,000
Indigo	Cwts	446,000	2,200,000
Barley	Maunds†	58,540,000	29,270,000
Jawar	Maunds	153,660,000	96,005,000
Baj	Maunds	80,500,000	56,350,000
Maize	Maunds	58,540,000	31,026,000
Gram	Maunds	900,000	72,000,000
Minor Products including fruits			181,005,480
Total in round numbers			£2,000,000,000

† The Indian unit of measure, Maund, is equivalent to about 70 pounds.

about the rise in the price of a few staples will give an idea as to the general increase in the wealth produced by agriculture.

Now, when the price of foodstuffs has gone up so tremendously, what has been the effect on the cultivators who produce these articles and who are supposed to be proprietors of the produce of their toil, if not of their land? We can just as well have the peasant's life described in the words of Sir O'Moore Creagh, who was the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army in the last years.

Articles	Selling prices calculated in seers per rupee	
	1913	1920
Wheat	14 seers	6 seers
Rice	10 seers	4 seers
Grains	20 seers	7 seers
Pulses	12 seers	4.5 seers
Meat	4 seers	1.8 seers

'The peasant digs, sows and reaps, the rain falls and the crops prosper and are reaped, but no sooner is the harvest over then the crop is divided. The landlord, be he government or a great landlord, takes the lion's share. The village shopkeepers and the village servants are paid from what remains when the producer has nothing left. The moneylender, town Vakil (lawyer) and medical men cannot squeeze him drier than they do. He again gets credit for his food and seed for the next crop from the village shopkeeper, which cost him dear, and he goes home to plough, sow and live in the hopes of a better time which never comes'.

So, this is the condition of the great bulk of population engaged in the principal industry of the country,—an industry whose production is increasing as far as possible within the bounds of its backwardness, and the value of whose produce has gone up almost fabulously. Then, who is benefited by the increase of production as well as rise in price? Into whose hand falls the wealth produced by the peasantry? To the Government, Zemindar and the land speculator goes a part in the form of revenue, rent and tax; and the rest, which is the more considerable part, goes to swell capital, both foreign and native,—commercial as well as industrial. So the agricultural population of India is the victim of a system of exploitation which works through various agencies in various ways.

It is held by nationalist economists that the enormous rise in prices and the resulting misery of the peasantry is due to the export of food grains. On the face of it, it looks reasonable, but facts do not corroborate the contention. Of the £180,000,000, which constituted the approximate value of the total agricultural produce exported from India in the year of 1919–20, only a little more than £52,000,000 was covered by food-stuffs. This cannot be called a very considerable amount. It is an increase of 16.5 per cent over the value of the food grains exported in 1913–14. But the prices have gone up by 75 per cent wholesale, not taking into account the tremendous rise in retail price. How is the difference of 50 per cent to be explained? Evidently there is great speculation in food-stuffs going on inside the country. The produce of the land is controlled by trades capital, which by various means expropriates the peasant of the fruit of his toil, in order to sell it back to him for a price several times higher.

Large-scale capitalist farms do not exist in India, agricultural production is mostly in the hands of small farmers producing on their own account. The only exceptions to this are the tea plantations and other minor cases. This being the case, ordinarily the total net income of the agricultural classes of India in 1919–20 should have been £,1,611,000,000. This figure is obtained by subtracting from the total value produced, £327,000,000 exported, £52,000,000 paid in land rent and £10,000,000 paid in other taxes and contributions indirectly connected with the land. If this amount is divided among the 209,000,000 people, including land workers, living on land there results a per capita of £8; but according to official statistics, the per capita income of the entire Indian population is calculated at less than £2. This is the average; that is, when the income of the rich which is included in the average, is taken into consideration, that of the poor is reduced to very little. So there must be some social element which absorbs by far the greater part of this £8 that would belong to the peasant otherwise. The rise in the price of foodstuffs as well as other agricultural produce means the prosperity of this social class on the one hand, and poverty and starvation for the cultivator on the other. This class is the Indian bourgeoisie, the tale of whose rather spectacular development has been told in the preceding part. The wealth wrung from the peasantry is being accumulated in the hands of the Indian bourgeoisie and invested by it in a more profitable field—modern industry. Of course it is to be understood that British capital still holds the monopoly of exploiting India; but a certain class has always tried to break the absoluteness of this monopoly, and of late has grown to the status of a powerful competitor who will no longer be ignored and is thus being invited into the corporation as a junior partner.

As in the industrial field, so in the agricultural, India has for a long time been reduced to capitalist exploitation, without receiving the benefits of capitalist development. In the industrial field, as shown before, handicrafts were destroyed in competition with higher means of production, the artisan class was pauperized, but the city proletariat in the strictest sense of the term, did not come into existence till very late. Likewise, while it is long since the land as well as the agricultural produce came under the capitalist economy, the cultivation of the soil was left largely in the hands of small farmers given to backward processes of production. Since agriculture remained undeveloped, the population engaged in this industry could not even derive the little benefits that accrue as side-issues of capitalist exploitation. Although it is true that in case he would not be by one way or other expropriated of the scanty produce of his land and labour, the Indian cultivator could save himself and his family from starvation, still it is a known fact that the actual agricultural production of the country is very low, and the methods and implements used for tilling the soil are almost primitive. Since agriculture had for a long, long time been the main national industry of India, the land and its produce have always been the means of speculation conducted by trades as well as usury capital. A helpless victim of the moneylender, the Indian peasant has always been in great lack of working capital. This conspicuous lack of accumulated wealth in the hands of the cultivator prevented the development of a class of rich farmer-proprietors who could avail themselves of the modern means of production in order to augment their income. The greater part of the burden of supporting the society falls on the back of the Indian cultivator, who has always been ground down to the earth. The wealth in the hands of the peasantry at the present time can be judged from the following figures.

In 1919 the total number of livestock amounted to 150,000,000 bovines (bulls, oxen, buffaloes and cows), 56,000,000 ovines (sheep, goats etc.) and 5,000,000 pack animals. The number of ploughs and carts in the same year was 19,500,000 and 5,000,000 respectively. These figures are only for British India, those for the Native States not being available. The method of cultivation is very backward; the old-fashioned hand-made ploughshare is still in vogue; and the ploughing is practically all done by cattle, the use of mechanical implements being very limited.

Small-scale farming and backward methods of cultivation are the causes of low production. Density of population and lack of fertile waste land, to a great extent have prevented the growth of large-scale farming in India. Although low in production to the area, the total amount of agricultural production of the country has always been considerable and it has greatly increased in the last half a century. This production was found to be sufficient for the industrial and commercial needs of the British bourgeoisie. So instead of investing its capital in agriculture as has been done in other colonies, the British bourgeoisie found it more profitable to develop first the means of communication and transport, in order to bring the entire agricultural produce of the country under capitalist exploitation. The Indian bourgeoisie was encouraged to invest its accumulated wealth in trade, tax-farming and land speculation. For a long time the Indian bourgeoisie occupied the place of a speculating middleman dependent on the capitalist structure of the foreign bourgeoisie. Therefore large-scale farming was not developed by native capital either. The production increased very little in proportion to the degree of exploitation of the producing class. The result has been the impoverishment of the latter. The incurable economic bankruptcy of the agrarian population of India is due to the fact that a backward and antiquated method of production has been reduced to the most modern and highly developed form of exploitation.

The British rulers have always followed the policy of exploiting the peasantry through the medium of a native agency—at first the permanent Zemindars, then the temporary tax-farmers, the village headman and always the native trading and moneylending class. These privileged classes sucked and still suck the blood of the cultivator under the auspices of the government, in return for the meritorious services they render to the latter. These parasitic elements participate in the traffic in production without in any way helping to increase production. They have been grafted on to the body of social production and distribution by the policy of imperialist capital, by which for a considerable time the normal growth of the native bourgeoisie has been prevented. The principal factor in the ruin of the Indian peasantry is usury. The pent-up energy of the capital debarred from a freer field of investment expresses itself through usury, which takes its most virulent form in advancing seeds to the peasant. As stated before, the usurer, trader and often the landholder, are as a rule united in the same person. In olden days the cultivator used to be at the mercy of the moneylender as a result of his futile efforts to liquidate the never-to-be satisfied demands of the landlord; of late, the rise in price puts the peasant more under his control. In order to pay rent, the cultivator borrows seeds or money at an excessive rate of interest, which often goes up as high as 600 per cent and is never lower than 100 per cent. The loan sometimes takes the form of 'conditional sale' by which, in case of default in payment of interest within a specified time, the mortgaged leasehold passes to the creditor automatically. The harvest is often sold to the trader even before sowing. Thus it is not the peasant nor the big landholder, but the trader and usurer, who are the practical owners of the agricultural produce of the country.

Formerly, and still to a great extent, the landholder and the trader were the usurers. But in 1914, the government decided to include usury in the general scheme of capitalist exploitation. This was done by passing the Co-operative Credit Societies Act, ostensibly designed to benefit and protect the cultivator. But the real object was to centralize usury-capital under the supervision of the State, in order that the former might not prejudice agricultural production by its irresponsible methods. On account of the fabulous exactions of usury capital, in the beginning of the century, the land was passing into the hands of speculating non-agriculturists at an alarming rate. This naturally affected production. The British bourgeoisie, with its advanced means of production and more developed consciousness, again came to the rescue; it had already 'freed' a considerable portion of the peasantry from feudal serfdom; now came the time to 'protect' it against a backward form of exploitation. Another motive behind this move was to find an outlet for the capital accumulated in the hands of the petty bourgeoisie. The Co-operative Credit Societies have grown fairly well. In 1918 there existed 32,439 of them with a capital of £17,554,000 of which only 1.9 per cent constituted state aid. In 1900 the number of Co-operative Credit Societies was 3498. The Co-operative Credit Societies flourish more in those provinces where big landholders do not exist. By reducing the rate of interest the cultivator has to pay, on the loan he must contract under any circumstances in order to be able to sow and harvest his land, the credit institution has stabilized him on his land, thus safeguarding agricultural production. On the other hand, supported by the petty bourgeoisie, which has its capital invested in them, the government through these credit societies can exercise the minutest control over the agrarian economy of the village. When the land does pass out of the hand of the cultivator, it is no longer to be a mere object of speculation; but the present tendency is to have it concentrated in the shape of large-scale capitalist farms.

The poverty of the peasantry has become so chronic and the chances of any radical change so non-existent that a complete agrarian revolution remains as the only solution. Neither the reformed land policy of the government, nor the frankly conservative, if not reactionary programme of the nationalist movement, offers any prospect for betterment. The growth of large-scale farms worked by machinery would deprive millions and millions of people today living on land, of the means of livelihood; and a step back to landlordism would make the progress retrograde. The population is so vast that it would be impossible for the modern industries, even if they increase to a hundred-fold their present magnitude, to absorb the mass of unemployed which would come into existence as a result of an extensive introduction of labour-saving machinery in agriculture. Besides, the growth of industry would throw into unemployment another large section of the population—the artisans. Thus nothing short of a radical readjustment of the national economy can improve the situation. There must be a revolution in order to change not only the superstructure, but the very basis of social-economics.

Significant signs of this coming revolution are to be found in various parts of the country. The peasantry is revolting. Although there have been isolated instances of peasant revolts from time to time during the last century and a half, it is only in recent years that the agrarian trouble has assumed an acute and widespread aspect in the national life of the country. The first agrarian revolt during the British period, occurred in 1835–38 when the English indigo planters, together with the newly created Bengal Zemindars, endeavoured to reduce the small farmers to a state of serfdom. The uprisings were of quite a serious nature and were headed by the liberal intelligentsia. The revolt was ultimately crushed, but the government passed legislation restricting the rights of the English Squires transplanted into India, and of native landlords, to revive a dead and uncivilized form of exploitation under a full-fledged bourgeois regime. In 1877, the peasants in the centre of Bombay Presidency revolted against the excessive rate of taxation imposed by the Zemindars as well as by the government. In 1907 there took place in the northern part of the province of Punjab, serious agrarian disturbances which had to be quelled by the declaration of martial law. This movement was due to the exorbitant increase of canal taxation; as a result of the riots the canal administration was somewhat reformed.

During years and decades the forces have been accumulating; the economic position of the peasantry was becoming absolutely hopeless. At last came the period of the enormous rise in prices during the war. This brought the situation to a climax. The condition of the peasantry became so bad that riots began to break out in different parts. In 1917 a series of uprisings occurred in the province of Bihar; this movement was directed against the big landholders, who had increased the rent by 25 per cent in spite of the failure of crops and the rise in prices. Since then the peasant movement has been spreading in other provinces; at the present moment the entire north of the country is affected and of late the movement has broken out in the south in the form of the Moplah rising. The agrarian troubles are assuming such tremendous proportions that they are causing growing disquietude among the Indian bourgeoisie, which never took the agrarian problem seriously in its political reckoning. A member of the Legislative Assembly from Madras writes:

> If the government believe that the present taxes can be continued or that fresh taxes can be levied or that the unfortunate owner of small holdings can be ground down any further, they would be living in a fool's paradise. They would be instrumental in this country in giving impetus to the agrarian unrest which is slowly developing itself all over the peninsula.

Making due concession to the typical bourgeois nationalist psychology of throwing all the blame on the foreign ruler, one can find in these words the recognition of the seriousness of the agrarian unrest. Now let us have the estimation of the peasant movement from another source. A member of the Punjab Provincial Legislative Council, in his speech, moving a resolution to amend the land laws, expressed the following sentiment:

> In coming to a just decision on this point we must bear in mind that a vast majority of land proprietors in the Punjab possess small holdings from 3 to 10 acres. If it is true, and it is true, that these wretched proprietors are living from hand to mouth; if it is true, and it is true, that they are buried in debt up to the eyes; if it is true, and it is true, that they are

> generally ill-fed, ill-clothed and without any education, then I say, with all deference to the official point of view, that the Land Revenue Administration in India generally, and in the Punjab particularly, has not succeeded. The condition of the agriculturists, labourers and cultivators, is even worse, and the agrarian movement in the neighbouring provinces is not without causes. The origin of such movements as communism, nihilism, and agrarian movements lies in the stomach.

So we find that the rebellious mood of the peasantry is becoming so manifest that it is causing alarm to the government and the landed aristocracy alike. Both are very much concerned in checking it. Before the Imperial as well as the Provincial Legislative Councils are being brought various measures and suggestions for the readjustment of land settlement. But since none of the parties, by virtue of their belonging to the exploiting class, is capable of striking at the root of the trouble, the situation is getting more serious and complicated.

Since 1918, the peasant movement in the north of the country has become a standing affair. Local risings and riots are very frequent and of such a serious nature that the military is often called in to cope with the situation. Appreciating the potentiality of the agrarian movement, the Indian National Congress admitted in its session of 1916 a great number of peasant delegates. But the bourgeois political movement has demonstrated its utter inability to understand as well as to lead the agrarian movement.

In the winter of 1920, the agrarian movement broke out in the most violent form; it almost assumed the proportions of an insurrection. This happened in the province of Oudh, where the Zemindari system prevails and the power of the landholders is very extensive. The peasants' actions were well organized; they were directed only against the rich landholders, until the government sent troops to protect their lives and properties. Houses were burnt, estates looted and crops destroyed by the rioters. The immediate cause of this serious outbreak had been the highhanded methods with which the Talookdars (big landholders) extracted from the cultivators the large sums of money which the former had contributed to the war fund in the previous years. This made the already heavy economic burden, caused by excessive taxation and rise in prices, unbearable for the poor peasants. Of course, the government rushed to the aid of the propertied class, and crushed the revolt with military force. But the movement has not died; on the contrary it is steadily spreading to other parts. These agrarian disturbances have, during the course of the last year, crystallized into a political movement, the character and activities of which will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter.

The latest phase of the agrarian trouble is the Moplah risings, on the coast of Malabar. Subsequent informations show that the movement has been advancing to the east coast as well. The Moplahs are the descendants of the Arab traders who came to India centuries ago. Their number does not exceed a million. They are very poor, agriculture being their means of livelihood, and have always been under the thumb of the moneylenders, who are Hindus. The majority of the big landholders in that part of the country also happen to be Hindus. The recent revolt is caused by purely economic causes. It was started by looting the houses of the landholders and moneylenders, with a demand for remission of rent and for getting back the land that had been concentrating in the hands of the speculators and capitalist agents. But in every instance of peasant disturbance the government promptly demonstrates its class affiliation by rendering military aid to the landholders; thus the class differentiation of Indian society is brought into evidence for those who care to see it. The Zemindars and landholders may struggle with the government to maintain their privileged position, unchanged by the new economic policy of the latter; and the government may 'protect' the cultivator from the abuses committed by the Zemindar; but as soon as the peasant revolts against the system that starves him to death, he finds the ranks closed in the enemy camp. Such is the social and economic position of the agricultural population of India. It stands between two classes of exploiters, 1. the foreign capitalist, and 2. native landholder, usurer and trader. The two may disagree and struggle about the share each should have in the exploitation, but both of them are identical in their fundamental social significance—they live and thrive on the labour of the toiler, be he a worker in the factory or cultivator of the soil.

CHAPTER THREE

The Proletariat

1. *Historical and Social Background*

The class of industrial workers living exclusively on wages earned in cities, is a comparatively recent phenomenon in Indian society. Of course, since 1820 the first coal mine was worked by mechanical process, the beginning of the steam railways dates as far back as 1853 and the first factory moved by steam power was built in 1851, workers were employed in these industries; and the number of industrial workers went on increasing in proportion to the growth of these modern industries. But, as has been shown in the previous parts, in a wide sense, India did not enter an industrial age till 1880, and the real industrialization of the country began still later. Therefore, though existing in small numbers and confined to a few localities, the proletarian class did not become a factor in the social organism till rather late.

This belated growth of the city proletariat is naturally due to the retarded industrial development of the country. Until very recently, India remained an agricultural land, and even today she is predominantly so, 72 per cent of her entire population being engaged in and living on the cultivation of the soil. But when we take into consideration the fact that in 1911 no less than 87 per cent of the entire population was dependent on agriculture and auxiliary industries, the rapidity with which the country is being industrialized becomes evident. It is needless to say that India did not choose to remain in a backward state of national economy so late as in the earlier years of the twentieth century; nor was it that the conservatism of her people and the shyness of native capital were the factors responsible for her industrial backwardness, as is held by the imperialist historian and is commonly believed. If the Indian people remained victims of conservatism till so late, it was not due to some peculiar characteristic of theirs, but because the great revolutionary agency, modern machinery, did not come into the country to shake the society to its very roots and make national conservatism an impossibility. And it was not that modern machinery was kept out of the country because the Indian people had a special dislike for it, but because it happened that, by one of those ironies of history, the capitalist class, which has used machine power to enslave the workers in other parts of the world, found it more profitable to do without it in India. If the wealthy class of Indian society came to the industrial field so late, it was not from any instinctive aversion to the pursuit on its part, but because the abnormal political condition of the country prevented it from developing along the same lines as did its peers in other lands. The economic development of India through the introduction of power-driven means of production, was not allowed for a considerable time by the foreign bourgeoisie which usurped the political power. Not being able to utilize the political State power, the Indian middle class could not enlist the aid of mechanical inventions in order to exploit the natural riches and labour power of the country. Large-scale machine-production, which in the countries of Western Europe made the trading class grow into a liberal bourgeoisie, and snatched the artisan from his tool and the peasant from his soil in order to herd them into crowded cities, affected Indian society in an entirely different way. In order to reap the full benefit of machine-production in one country, the foreign rulers found it profitable to keep machinery out of India.

Just at the same time that the spinning-jennies and fly-shuttles were contributing to the rapid growth of the Lancashire towns in which masses of ruined craftsmen were forced into factories, the product of the same mechanical agencies was creating a contrary effect in India. The imported cotton manufactures, forced upon the Indian market by the foreign conqueror, wrought havoc among the native weavers, but instead of driving them to factories, made them change their tools for the ploughshare. The introduction of higher means of production in cotton manufacture marked an era of social and economic progress in England, but it had a retrograde effect upon India. The forces that helped to build so many industrial centres in the former, were used for the destruction of prosperous towns and urban industrial centres in the latter. The reason of this diametrically opposite effect of the same cause was that Indian as well as English society came under a more developed method of exploitation, but the improved means of production which made this new method of exploitation possible, remained the property of the bourgeoise of one country, which became the political ruler of the other. Every force, physical or social, has two attributes—destructive and constructive,—negative and positive. Whereas England felt both the effects of social force expressed through the mechanical inventions of the eighteenth century, in India, which became an economic and political dependency of England in consequence of the expansion of the system created by this force, only the negative, the destructive effect was felt. The self-same force of exploitation which distinguished itself by bringing into existence the infamous century of slave-labour and child-torture in England, contributed to the breaking up of the artisan class of Bengal, but without bringing in its train great industrial cities with swarms of slum-dwellers, the progenitors of the mighty modern proletariat.

In the first part of the eighteenth century the economic structure of Indian society corresponded to that stage which precedes the industrial epoch. Handicraft was very highly developed; and a thriving trading class had grown, based on the productions of the prosperous and industrious artisan. Trade and industry had led to the rise of towns, rich and populous. When Clive entered Murshidabad, the then capital of the Kingdom of Bengal, he found the city 'as extensive, populous, and rich as the city of London, with this difference, that there are individuals in the first possessing infinitely greater property than in the last'. Clive saw Murshidabad in 1757. When in the 80s of the eighteenth century the city of Dacca, the capital of East Bengal, came under the domination of the East India Company, it had a population of 200,000 and its export of manufactured articles was so large that the value of only one commodity, namely muslin, amounted to £ 300,000 a year. Nor were these exceptional cases; all over the country, and especially in the province of Bengal, trade and industry flourished, and these had been concentrated in urban centres. Indian society was no longer confined within the narrow limits of agrarian economy. Industry had ceased to be a mere part of the village organism; it had grown too big for the necessities of the village communities and thus had long ago transgressed the boundaries of the village and diverged to the large urban centres, there to be commercialized by a wealthy trading class. It is very often forgotten that the economic relations of the Western nations with the East, and particularly India, is not the same today as it was in the beginning of the eighteenth century. European traders were first attracted to the Indies not by raw materials, but by manufactured wares. By the end of the eighteenth century, the textile industry of Bengal was so well controlled by native trades capital and capitalist exploitation had obtained such a high degree of efficiency 'that cotton and silk goods of India up to 1813 could be sold for a profit in the British market from 50 to 60% lower than those fabricated in England'. (H.H. Wilson, *History of India*).

Such was the economic condition of India when industrialization took place in England and subsequently in other European countries. While the most highly developed imperialism of today is marked by the export of capital to the colonies, the movement was the reverse in the early days of imperialism. Then wealth was imported from the colonies; and this imported wealth helped greatly the growth of modern industry. But curious as it may seem, the product of these capitalist industries not only prevented but destroyed the growth of industrial capitalism in the colonies. India is the most remarkable example of how capitalism, being by its very nature a force of social progress, has nevertheless led to social stagnation, if not retrogression. The capitalist industries built in England with slum-labour as their social basis aided greatly by the wealth imported from the colonies, were solidified and extended endlessly by selling their products in countries like India, to the serious economic detriment of the latter. Although India, in respect of craft and trade, stood on the eve of capitalist industrialism in the eighteenth century, the general economic tendency since then has been more towards agriculture and less and less towards manufacture. This state of economic affairs held good till the closing years of the nineteenth century, when the social forces of history broke the bonds of artificial restriction and asserted themselves. Thus it was not less than a century and a half that India was held in an abnormal state of economic progress. The expression 'abnormal state of economic progress' sounds strange; but it expresses exactly what took place in India during the period from the middle of the eighteenth century till the end of the nineteenth. The political control of the country passed to the bourgeoisie, which, however, happened to be foreign. Under the political rule of the bourgeoisie the economic exploitation of the society could not remain in the fetters of antiquated methods. Gradually the entire production of the land was brought under capitalist exploitation on the one hand, and manufacturers of capitalist industries destroyed to a great extent the backward form of craft production, on the other. So the national economy could not be said to have stayed stationary, since under the capitalist system and modern political regime of the bourgeoisie, the total production of the country increased; but the power of productivity and the kind of produce were determined by the needs and convenience of foreign capital, which reigned supreme. The economic basis of social production underwent a radical change in consequence of the fact that a capitalist government ruled the country, but no great transformation took place in the form and method of production. The productivity and labour power of India were included in the general scheme of capitalist exploitation, but she had to remain on the outskirts, occupying the place of a reserve force, so to say.

The industries of England needed a market as well as raw materials. India promised to supply both. But an India with her own modern industrial production would cease to do so. Therefore, the same British capitalist class, which found the machine an invaluable instrument of exploitation in the home country, prevented its introduction into India. While at home machinery aided the English capitalist, in India the absence of it was found to be more conducive to the interest of the foreign bourgeoisie. If Great Britain is what it is today as the result of capitalist production, India is what she is today due to capitalist exploitation. If capitalism has concentrated 67 per cent of the population of the British isles in the cities, it is also capitalism which has driven 75 per cent of the population of India to the soil. While the proportion of the total population of India engaged in arts and crafts was 25 per cent in the latter part of the eighteenth century, it dropped to 15 per cent a hundred years later. At the time of the British conquest, in the province of Bengal alone, several million people were occupied in the weaving and spinning industry; the numerical strength of this class of artisans is reduced to less than half a million at present. This is of course, the consequence of higher forms of production introduced into the textile industry. But how negative has been the effect of mechanical inventions in India may be judged from the fact that in the beginning of the present century the number of operatives in the power-driven cotton textile factories of the country was less than 200,000. It shows that machine production eliminated from the field of social economics an older form of production without replacing it, as in other modern countries, by large-scale capitalist industries. This method of imperialist exploitation dislocated the social organism. Millions and millions of people were deprived of the means of livelihood by the destruction of craft industries brought about by the import of machine-made commodities, but modern industries were not allowed to grow in the country; thus the artisans ousted from their craft by the machine could not be tied to the same machine as wage slaves. The Indian artisans, after having lost their independent means of production, were not absorbed into large industrial centres, but were driven to the land. In India, the social expression of machine production did not take the form of a city proletariat, but that of a vast mass of land-workers and pauperized peasantry.

In order that the class-differentiation of the present Indian society be properly understood, it is necessary to make a brief review of the process by which the country was reduced to capitalist exploitation without having felt the social readjustment that comes in the train of capitalist development. The economic transformation of Indian society has gone through such confusing up-and-down, backward-and-forward stages during the last two hundred years, that not a little difficulty is encountered, even by the modern-minded Indians themselves, in determining its present character and the immediate outcome, social and political. There is a tendency to think that Indian society is not divided into classes but castes. This tendency assumes active expression in the social theories of liberal reformers of the nationalist movement. This tribe of social reformers can be divided into two categories; the radical religionists with strong national jingoism and the class-conscious modern bourgeoisie with liberal tendencies. The first take upon themselves the great task of proving that Indian culture has been a unique thing, that it developed in its own way and that the structure of Indian society has not been subject to the action and reaction of material laws. And, following this course of reasoning, these apostles of Indian culture come to the conclusion that the class struggle never soiled the sanctity of Indian society, and that it is never going to be the principal factor in the process of social readjustment. They preach that class struggle is the peculiar outcome of the materialist civilization of the West and is not possible in Indian society, which is based on the knowledge of the spiritual essence of man. 'Gandhism' is the political expression of this social movement. The second class of social reformers is the modern bourgeoisie. They are the disciples of the 18th century school of economics, and their philosophy is that of the nineteenth-century freethinkers and utilitarians. No national egoism can make them blind to the class cleavage in Indian society; but class egoism, the idea that by the dint of their education and privileged positions they are the custodians of national interests, makes them diffuse the social character of the present struggle. They encourage the development of a modernized version of religion, whose futile fuss about caste seeks to drown the din of class struggle. These bourgeois reformers, who are the most conscious leaders of nationalism, are very much interested in the uplift of the 'depressed' classes; and while holding thousands of wage-slaves in perpetual starvation, they do not hesitate in the least to have them shot when these slaves show signs of revolt, in order to uplift themselves.

It has been shown in the preceding chapter how the Indian peasantry, in spite of their belonging to various castes and to the two great antagonistic religions, namely Hinduism and Islam, have been always weighed down in misery by the landlords, usurers, and traders; and how, at the present moment, the agrarian revolts are the result of accentuated class differentiation, the political movement for national liberation notwithstanding. We do not want to go into an analysis of the caste system. But it is necessary to throw a look back on history to ascertain what was the economic basis of caste. In the Hindu scriptures and classics the caste system is glorified in various ingenious ways. But coming down to the origin of it, one discovers slavery. The caste line was drawn first between the Aryan conquerors and the conquered aborigines. The distinction was made by colour, the conqueror being fair and the conquered dark. The Sanskrit word for caste is Varna which means colour. The divisions and sub-divisions in the caste system were subsequently evolved in accordance with the inter-mixture between the conquered and the conquering races, and the development of tools. The social growth followed almost the same process of evolution as in the savage and barbaric periods in the human society everywhere, only with certain modifications in the super-structure, caused by local circumstances. The physical and climatic conditions told heavily upon the structure of Indian society. Slavery, Feudalism, Serfdom—all took somewhat different forms. The country being mostly flat, and the fertility of the soil almost uniform, the distribution of population was rather even. For a considerable time and up to very recent date, the village formed the social unit; and the village community was based upon the hereditary division of labour stereotyped into the caste system, which in the commercial and manufacturing epoch, developed into trade and craft-guilds resembling greatly their prototype in contemporary Europe. Caste was the basis of socio-economic organized production, but did not prevent exploitation. The class line ran through the caste system. So when in recent years, by virtue of the increasing introduction of machine-made commodities and the growth of modern industry inside the country, caste has ceased to be a living social factor, its economic essence, the class division, stands naked. Neither the hollow shell of the decayed caste system, nor the lingering traces of religion and priest-craft, nor the great movement for national freedom, can hide the class line which divides the whole social organism horizontally into two distinct parts.

It is held that the great bulk of the Indian people still live in such an economically backward stage, that it will be long before the class differentiation will be clear in the society. The caste system is looked upon as a factor which diffuses the class cleavage between exploiter and exploited. It is said that even the exploited class is divided into castes which prevent them from understanding their unity of interest. There are some who go as far as to say that a worker feels himself more akin to his employer if he be of the same caste, than to his fellow worker of another caste. It will be shown later that the facts disprove all these preconceived ideas. The main argument is, however, that capitalism has not come to India, therefore the things that accompany capitalist mode of production cannot be found there. This is a wrong theory and all confusions arise from it. Firstly, capitalist exchange and, to a certain extent, production of commodities prevailed in India at the time of, and even before, the British Conquest. Secondly, the British government is the political apparatus of the capitalist class; India, therefore, could not have been left untouched by capitalist exploitation under its rule. During the hundred and seventy years of British rule, the social production of India has been reduced completely under capitalist economy. But, since the capitalist exploitation was carried on by a foreign imperialist bourgeoisie, the outward effects of the capitalist mode of production were not clearly felt on the Indian society. Nevertheless, the fundamental social transformations that result from the capitalist control of national economy have taken place, and the present as well as the future of the country is bound to be determined by these transformations. It is necessary to investigate how these social transformations occurred without causing serious disequilibrium on the surface.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, when the English merchant invaders were establishing their political domination in some parts of the country, India economically stood at a stage which under a normal course of development would have led up to modern capitalist industrialism. Although industrial production was still based on the hereditary craftsmanship according to the caste system, another class had developed which controlled the distribution of the commodities produced by the guilds. The hereditary artisan had ceased, in many instances, to be an independent member of the autonomous village community. His production was no longer the property of the community to be exchanged by himself into other necessities produced by other equally independent members of the community. Arts and crafts, which centuries ago had arisen as a part of village economy within the bonds of caste, had long ceased to be the exclusive concern of the isolated villages but were taken from one province to another in order to be sold and resold by a prosperous trading class with considerable capital accumulated in its hand. The principal industries had been commercialized and their base had been removed from the village confines to the towns, hundreds of which flourished all over the country. Still confined to the caste-guilds in so far as labour was concerned, the social and economic control of the industrial products had gone out of the hands of the artisan. Instead of completely controlling production and distribution as before, the craftsman was supplied with raw materials by the trading middle-man, who took the finished product out of the former's hands, not to distribute according to the needs of the community, but to sell it for profit. By this class of traders, the artisans were spared the worries of securing raw materials, of exchanging their fabricated wares and looking about for other necessities of life. All these troubles had been taken over by the benevolent trader. Production was largely separated from the family and concentrated in towns under the control of trades capital. In the towns, manufactories had grown, employing often more than a hundred hands, who worked for the trading capitalist, and thus had ceased to be independent artisans of the olden days. Individual or domestic production was to a great extent displaced by collective production, but the ownership had been shifted from the producer to the mercantile class. The secondary, exchange value of industrial products had acquired predominance over the primal use-value. Busy commerce had developed, bringing in its train a prosperous class of capitalists who controlled the economic life of the society, in spite of the fact that the old caste division still persisted in the field of production. The magnitude of commercial capitalism that prevailed in India about the middle of the eighteenth century can be judged from the testimony among many others, of Verelst, one of the first English Governors of Bengal. He writes: 'The Bengal silks, cloths, etc., were dispersed to a vast amount to the West and North, inland as far as Gujrat, Lahore and even Ispahan'. The state of India's social economics and the rise and power of a capitalist class in the first part of the eighteenth century are borne out by the following words of Burke:

> There are to be found a multitude of cities not exceeded in population and trade by those of the first class in Europe; merchants and bankers who have once vied in capital with the Bank of England, whose credit has often supported a tottering state and preserved their governments in the midst of war and desolation; millions of indigenous manufacturers and mechanics.

Thus we find that at the time of the British invasion, India stood at the stage of social economics which would have been the period of transition of her industry from manufacture to machinofacture. But it did not happen; the machine did not come to India. She could not pass from mercantile capitalism to industrial capitalism. The social progress was obstructed. But the secret of the abnormal economic condition of India during a century and a half lies in the fact that without the machine, the effects of machine production were not kept out of the country. The destructive effects of machine production were fully felt on the national economy.

With the growth of machine industry in England, her economic relation with India changed. The trade was reversed. Instead of importing manufactured goods from India, the British East India Company began to export to India articles fabricated by machinery in England. The cost of production in India was so low that even the English machine industry had to be protected in its early days against Indian imports by the enormous duty of 80 per cent ad valorem. Owing to this protective tariff, but principally on account of the introduction of a higher form of production, Indian manufactured goods were thrown out of the English market. But this was not all; the tables were turned before long. Cotton fabrics began to be exported from Lancashire to India. The cost of production in India was low, but that in England in those days was also low; besides, the English manufacturers had the advantage of superior machinery. Thus, foreign machinofacture was pitted against Indian manufacture. The result could not be anything but the collapse of the latter. Machine production destroyed craft-industry and trades capital in England as well as in India; but its effects on the economic distribution of the population were not the same. In both countries the artisans were dispossessed of their means of livelihood; but while in England they were herded into the factories, in India they were driven back to the soil. But there, the land was over-crowded; so the influx of the mass of ruined artisans from the town created a serious dislocation in the agrarian population. The newcomers could not be accommodated without displacing others. This pressure on land provided a chance of speculation to the trading class, undermined in the towns by the ruin of industry. Thus while in England, machine production attracted the people from the village to the city, and pushed the capitalist class from a lower to a higher form of exploitation, from trade to industry, in India, the effects of the same machine production happened to be the contrary. It drove the town artisans back to the village, thus reducing their standard of living and dragging the structure of national economy backward. It induced capital to take to petty-trading and land-speculation instead of entering upon an area of industrial development. In short, India was reduced from the state of a manufacturing country, to that of an agricultural country. But on account of the scarcity of land, the ruined artisans could not become peasants; there was no land to get, at least for a large number of people. Thus, machine production did bring into existence in India also a vast number of people divested of all ownership. But the difference was, that instead of a city proletariat, there was born in India as a result of the evolution of higher means of production, a class of wage-earners tied to the land. Factories were not allowed to grow, thus these masses of the dispossessed could not do anything but become superfluous auxiliaries to agriculture. Since this vast number of agricultural workers came into being, unemployment has been a standing problem in India. On account of the small individual farms prevailing there, a large number of agricultural labourers could not be employed on the land with any steadiness. In consequence of this dislocation in the economic distribution of the Indian people, brought about by the one-sided influence of foreign machine production, a large section of the population could not be absorbed into the economic organism of the society. The permanent presence of this mass of unemployed and unemployables in the country constituted a serious obstacle to the economic struggle of the city proletariat when the latter came into existence subsequently, as a result of the rather laborious and stunted growth of modern industry in India.

India was prevented from developing machine-industry by two causes: First, in the early days of the rule of the British traders a tremendous amount of wealth was exploited and exported from the country wihtout having brought anything in return. Second, in order to preserve the monopoly on the Indian market, the export of machinery from England to India was prohibited by imposing heavy custom duties. The heavy drain of wealth exhausted the economic vitality of India for a considerable time, thus disabling her capitalist class and preventing it from showing any active signs of struggle. The effects of the export duty on machineries were such that till the sixties of the last century, the cost of building a factory in India was four times as much as that required to build the same in England. And it was so, notwithstanding the cheapness of Indian labour. The British bourgeoisie, which by virtue of possessing higher means of production, imposed its political power upon India, found it very important to deprive the Indian capitalist class of the access to modern machine production. This policy was vital for the continuance of the exploitation of India by British capital. Looked at from the point of view of world economics, the social progress of India during the period from the middle of the eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth has not been retrograde. Indian society, which was at the period of mercantile capitalism at the time of the British Conquest, has been brought under the exploitation of industrial, finance and imperial capital. Political power went into the hands of the bourgeoisie which, for the convenience of unhampered exploitation, broke down, either violently or peacefully, all obstacles that stood in the way. The social production and economic life of India today are inseparably interwoven with the structure of world-capitalism. The agricultural industry of India is an adjunct of the British industrial system, and for this reason, 72 per cent of her population engaged in the cultivation of the earth, to all intents and purposes, occupy the social position of proletariat in the wide scheme of capitalist exploitation. Capitalist exploitation under the political rule of a liberal bourgeoisie, has helped to clarify the class differentiation as well. Though the Indian capitalist class was not allowed a free development, or to enlist in its service the modern mechanical inventions, it was not excluded altogether from the scheme of exploitation. As soon as its social aspirations were broken down in competition with a higher mode of production, its good offices were enlisted by the foreign ruler, who soon made out of it an admirable means of exploitation and the social basis upon which the extraneous political domination could rest.

So till the closing decades of the last century, the Indian capitalist remained a ridiculous adjunct to the imperial capital. It was not until the eighties that he demanded a more dignified position. This renaissance of Indian capitalism was marked by a strong tendency towards industrialism, and brought into being a city proletariat, separated from the ranks of a proletarian nation.

In the centuries preceding the British invasion, the development of industry and the consequent expansion of trade led to the growth of towns. The proportion of the population living in urban centres in the early part of the eighteenth century was greater than in the end of the nineteenth. A large section of the urban population was engaged in trades and industries. In proportions as industries were brought under control, the number of independent craftsmen were replaced by wage-earners, complete or partial. So, in the first half of the eighteenth century, there was a proletarian element in the urban population of India. But industrial capital affected India in a different way; instead of being a revolutionary social force, it pushed the country to a state of national economy which it had already passed beyond. In the early years of British rule, Indian towns were destroyed by the products of English machine-industry. The population of Dacca, one of the principal textile centres, diminished from 200,000 in 1770 to 90,000 in 1840. In the middle of the eighteenth century, the people living in urban centres were estimated to be 25 per cent of the entire population; at the end of the nineteenth the proportion had fallen to 15 per cent. The decadence of formerly flourishing towns occurred in all parts of the country, till new and modern cities began to be built; these did not grow up around industrial centres as happened in Europe, but on the sea-board, as a result of busy export and import trade, and inland, as administrative centres and as stations both for collecting raw materials to be exported and for bringing the imported manufactured goods within the reach of the people. Naturally, the great majority of the inhabitants of these new cities were wage-earners, but the absence of an industrial proletariat was conspicuous. The only national industry of any importance that was allowed to exist, or that could resist the attack of machine-made commodities, had to take shelter in the confines of far-away villages. The native trading class found it more profitable to sell cheap imported articles, than to handle the scanty produce of the bankrupt village artisans. Thus, even handicraft industry, which had been developed to the first stages of social production as far back as the end of the seventeenth century, was again pushed back on an individual basis. The new cities of India were not the outcome of the native social progress, but were the outposts of the foreign ruler and trade-counter of the foreign bourgeoisie. But this original artificial character of theirs soon changed; their petty bourgeoisie and pigmy intellectual wage-earning population gradually grew into the most progressive class of Indian society. Out of these elements, together with the progressive landholder and country trader, arose the modern bourgeoisie. But the majority of them remained in an economic condition corresponding to that of the proletariat.

The economic and social position of the intellectual proletariat who form a great majority of the population of most of the modern cities, should not be passed unnoticed. In recent years, the enormous rise in the cost of living and the acute scarcity of accommodation, have driven most of these intellectual workers out of the city proper to the adjacent suburbs or villages, whence they come to work in the town every day. In social standard they belong to the intelligentsia; by profession they are clerks; ministerial employees in the government offices, assistants in the large trading firms, teachers, etc. The system of modern education introduced by the British government, opened the schools for all, irrespective of caste-division. Anyone who could afford to meet the expenses, sent their children to the schools. A product of these schools, the intellectual workers are recruited from all castes. Today they all belong to the same class of wage-earners, though the artificial social traditions of caste-division still persist among them in so far as inter-marriage is not permitted. More than three-fourths of the intelligentsia, which constitutes 5 per cent of the total popultion, belong to the rank of intellectual workers. The economic condition of these people is absolutely miserable, and it is more so, considering the fact that psychologically they belong to the bourgeoisie and not to the working-class. Their mode of living is that of the former; but the standard falls very short; the average income of this class of workers is 20 rupees (£ 2 at the present inflated rate of exchange) per month; and when the fact that each wage-earner has several dependents to support is taken into consideration, the actual rate of income goes down by many times. Their standard of living, in so far as clothes and dwelling are concerned, has to be higher than that of the manual worker; consequently, in actual nutrition they are worse off than latter. Although many of them have come up from the lower castes, thanks to the modern semi-education, the environment in which they work has developed a petty-bourgeois psychology in them. Depending on the bourgeois institutions for their means of livelihood, they are supporters of the present system of society, in spite of the fact that in the latter they can never be anything more than wage-slaves.

Till a quarter of a century ago, all that had been felt on the surface of Indian society of the effects of modern capitalism, was commerce organized on a large scale, and the bureaucratic administrative institutions which mark a capitalist state. These were the reflex of the industrial system of England. They were the integral parts of the scheme of exploitation of British industrial capital, which held India in subjugation. So the class proletarianized in India by imperialist capital was not so much the ruined and expropriated artisans; the latter, though reduced to the level of pauperized proletariat for all practical purposes, were pushed back to the land, to sink into an economic condition worse than that of the wage-earners. Capitalism, exploiting India through the media of commerce and bureaucracy, created a different kind of proletariat; this was the petty intellectual workers. The labour-power of this proletarian class was less mental than muscular since all it could sell for a starvation wage was not so much intellectual assets, as the capacity to read, write, and count. The writing too, was not original; what was needed was a copying machine. But this class of petty intellectual workers, though economically belonging to the category of propertyless wage-earners, socially and psychologically clung to the bourgeois customs and tradition. Their economic condition was objectively destined to make them revolutionary, but their social prejudices not only prevented the growth of revolutionary class-consciousness, but actually dragged them deeper and deeper in the depths of decay and demoralization. Still, it was from the ranks of this class of social slaves as well as from among the students that the revolutionary element in Indian nationalism arose. And when we consider the fact that 90 per cent of the students in the primary and secondary educational institutions are doomed to enter the ranks of the petty intellectual proletariat, the class contradiction in the folds of the Indian nationalist movement becomes clear. Since the class of petty intellectual workers has always been directly exploited either by the government or English employers, it is but natural that the class-oppression should appear to it as foreign oppression. But this equilibrium is bound to be disturbed in proportion as the native capitalist class comes on the field to employ more and more petty, semi-manual workers. Inevitably the development of native industrialism will bring the factory-labourers to the front lines of the revolutionary ranks, in contradistinction to the petty intellectuals, despite the latters' completely proletarianized economic condition. During the recent years, this process of re-shuffling of the revolutionary forces has been going on in the Indian movement, and at the present moment it looks quite probable that class-consciousness will ere long transcend the limits of nationalist preocupations.

The economic cleavage between the propertied and wage-earning classes of the bourgeois society is becoming wider. The poor proprietor among the intelligentsia is being expelled from the blessed realm of ownership by the process of the concentration of wealth in the hands of those who know the art of converting wealth into capital. The following extracts from the report (1919–1922) of the Educational Commissioner of India, are indicative of the economic condition of the lower strata of the middle class:

> In the Central Provinces there has been a further fall of nearly 15 per cent in the number of pupils in the High School Department. This was due to the high cost of living . . . . There is a drop in the number of pupils in the high school stage of the United Provinces, due also to hard times. In the Province of Bihar, there is a fall in the number of students, due to the same cause. But the colleges in all provinces are overcrowded. The decline in Bengal of middle English schools can be attributed to economic distress.

This shows that facilities for higher college (University) education available to the rich are not sufficient, the colleges being overcrowded, but the very scanty provision for secondary education cannot be fully availed of, because the petty intellectuals are finding themselves economically unable to send their children to the schools. And the diminution of secondary education in the ranks of the wage-earning semi-intellectuals signifies a corresponding fall in their prospect of finding employment.

In order to have a reserve force, the British government brought into existence more of these ministerial workers than could be absorbed in the present organism of the capitalist structure. Since the closing years of the past century, unemployment has prevailed in the lower strata, or the wage-earning section of the intelligentsia. This unemployed element grew till it became unemployable. And an element which finds no chance of getting fitted into the social organism, converts itself into a force of destruction. Even after the political independence of the country has been achieved, this army of petty and semi-intellectual workers will still remain considerably unemployable, because a bourgeois national government would not be able to absorb it completely, nor change radically its economic position in the social organism. The fundamental thing is that in every sense of social economics, this class has been proletarianized, and the substitution of one capitalist government by another cannot and will not change their position. Their social prejudices must succumb before pressing economic necessities. It will not be long before they realize that their salvation lies in the frank recognition of their position, and consciously take their stand where they really belong.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Proletariat (Contd.)

2. *Process of Development*

As the result of the devious working of the same force of capitalist exploitation, the modern urban centres of India, which grew as the outposts of capitalist civilization, were until rather recently conspicuous by the absence of the inevitable counterpart of capitalism, namely, the proletariat. The proletarianization of the Indian masses was not intensive, but extensive. The modern industries first introduced into India having been mining and transport, the workers employed in them were not concentrated in cities. The modern urban centres continued to be purely commercial marts till the earlier eighties of the last century, and predominantly so, as late as the beginning of the current one. The great majority of the working class, belonging to the category of wage-earners partially or totally, lived in the rural district. The cities offered very little attraction to the purely manual workers, except to those employed in domestic services and other non-industrial occupations of comparatively little importance. What little remained of the handicrafts that survived the attack of imported machine-made goods, had to do so by retiring within the confines of remote villages. In 1899 the industrial workers, in their partially or totally wage-earning capacity, were distributed as follows: The total number of people living on industrial wages was estimated at a little over 15,000,000, making a population of 33,000,000, with their families and dependents. This included about 6,000,000 women workers. That is, about 8.5 per cent of the then population of the country was dependent upon industrial wages. Accurate information as to what portion of this class of industrial workers belonged to the city proletariat, is not available. But considering the magnitude of modern machine-industry that existed in those days, the portion cannot be placed higher than 15 per cent. That is, the number of workers employed in modern large-scale industries on the eve of the twentieth century could not be more than 1,500,000 which, together with their families numbered 3,300,000. At that period, the principal industries of the country were transport (including railways, tramways and river steam-navigation), mining (coal, gold, iron, manganese, mica etc.), textile (cotton, wool, silk and jute), electric and gas works, and tea plantations. The number of cities with a population of 50,000 or over was 45. But very few of them could be called modern industrial centres. Only Calcutta with its ship-building yards, railway workshops, gas works, and jute mills; Bombay with its harbour and dockyards, railway workshops and cotton mills; Ahmedabad with its cotton mills; Cawnpur with its woollen mills and leather factories; Jabbulpur with its railway workshops and government arms factory; Jamalpur with its locomotive workshops; Ranigunj with the surrounding coal fields; Cossipur, Ichapur, Dum Dum and Kirkee with their government arms and powder factories; Rangoon with its rice mills and harbour; Karachi, Madras and Chittagong with their harbours and dockyards; and the tea plantations of Assam and Darjeeling could be called modern industrial centres with a proletarian population accumulated there.

The remaining 13,500,000 (that is 29,700,000 including families and dependents) of the population living entirely or partially on industrial wages in 1899–1900 were domiciled in the rural districts. These people were occupied in the following trades: weaving and spinning, ceramics, tanning and leather works, carpentry, metal works, sugar manufacture, other food industries, manufacture of chemicals, building industry, manufacture of boats, carts and other means of transport, dress-making and manufacture of toilet articles, etc., etc. The precarious state of these handicraft industries and the uncertain economic condition of the workers engaged in them have been dealt with in the previous part. These artisans, once engaged in prosperous trade in the town, were ruined and dislodged from their hereditary economic position by the introduction of machine-made products imported from abroad. The busy towns, once centres of manufacture as well as trade, were divested of the character of centres of production and became exclusively those of distribution and administration. Thus, the urban population engaged in productive work was driven to the villages; but even in the remotest corners of the country, the artisan did not free itself from the competition of the cheap imported goods. Consequently, what remains of the rural industrial worker today is partially engaged in and dependent upon agriculture, and mostly upon agricultural wages at that.

This dislocation of the social equilibrium has destroyed the economic basis of caste-division. Industrial, professional, and cultural callings of the Indian society were confined within the limits of hereditary caste-divisions. In the eighteenth century caste, in so far as the industrial population was concerned, had taken the character of trade guilds, which were shattered by the higher method of production of industrial England. Nevertheless, till today innumerable caste-divisions are found existing in the Indian society, and the superficial barriers, separating these castes have not been broken down as yet. But a little enquiry under the surface discloses the fact that the very foundation of the caste system has been undermined. The craft divisions on which the castes were built to all practical purposes have ceased to exist with the ruin of the craft industry. It only remained for the large-scale machine-industry to gather the demobilized human forces and build up a new social structure; but this unifying force was very late in coming. Therefore, in spite of their destruction as factors of social-economics, the caste-divisions continued to exist; but they were but the memory of something dead and gone,—a social prejudice that cannot be forgotten easily unless a violent storm of new institutions based upon higher means of production, knocks the undermined structure to the dust and throws it to the four winds. The Indian worker, released from caste bonds, has not been enslaved to the machine; on the contrary, he has been tied to the soil which his forefather had left long ago. Unlike large-scale industry, agriculture does not kill individualism. Therefore, three-fourths of the Indian people, in spite of being engaged in the same industry, agriculture, can keep themselves hedged within various caste-divisions whose economic basis has ceased to exist long ago. The following figures taken from the Census Report of 1911 are interesting. They show that caste, which existed in so far as inter-marriage and eating together were concerned, did not have any economic importance. Altogether 89 castes were found to be in existence including a large section of the Mussulman population as well. But the actual professional (industrial) divisions functioning were but 21. In most of these professional divisions were engaged members of various castes. Let us take some of the most important castes for instance. The number of Brahmins, whose profession according to the caste system is study, teaching and worship, was 14,598,708. Now in the same year, the number of people occupied in professions and callings allowed only to the Brahmins according to caste law was at the most, 5,695,049. Therefore about nine million Brahmins must have been engaged in non-caste or extra-caste callings.

On the other side, of the 5,695,049 engaged in Brahminic professions, more than 70 per cent belonged to other castes which are debarred from these noble and holy professions by caste regulations. Kshatriyas or Chattris or Rajputs, all taken together, were numbered at 9,430,095. These are military castes. They are to occupy themselves only with national defence. The number of people engaged in works allowed to the military castes was 2,398,586 in the same years. Besides more than 50 per cent of the public forces of India is recruited from the Mussulman and other classes outside the

Kshatriyas. From this it follows that almost 90 per cent of the military caste was occupied in callings, below or above their caste-limits. The numerical strength of the Baniyas or trading and money-lending caste, was put at 1,125,517. But the actual number of people dependent upon these professions was not less than 17,839, 102. And among these could be found Brahmins of venerable parentage and direct descendants of valorous Kshatriyas. There were 11,493,733 Chamars, that is leather and hide workers, one of the lowest and most despised castes. Now the same years found only 698,741 people engaged in this industry. Therefore the rest of these hated, untouchable Chamars must have been accommodated somewhere else in the social organism. Telis or the oil-crushing caste was 4,233,250. But the number of workers employed in this trade was hardly half a million (exact figure unavailable). By the year 1911 most of the oil consumed in the country was crushed in power-driven mills situated in urban centres employing workers from all castes, not excluding even the Brahmin. All the different sub-castes belonging to the guild of the weaving and spinning industry was calculated at 15,306,041. But the workers employed in the textile factories were not recruited exclusively from the given caste and the actual number of people engaged in handicraft textile industry was less than 8 millions.

This same process of disintegration and economic chaos may be marked in all the castes. A Brahmin can be found sweeping the street or engaged in the kitchen, whereas the son of a washerwoman will be occupying a high administrative post, or the son of the weaver teaching philosophy in the University. In short, capitalism had done its work and done it well, but one-sidedly. The destruction was very nearly complete, but the process of reconstruction was barred from setting in immediately. The working-class of the Indian nation had been expropriated of its means of production. It had ceased to be the owner of its tools, thus losing the power to wield them according to dictates of its own necessity; its productivity had been crushed under the mass-production of machine-industry. The productive elements of the community had been practically reduced to the state of wage-slavery. But it was only the distribution of capitalism that had so far been introduced into India. With the absence of mass-productive industrial centres, the masses of Indian workers, in spite of having been expropriated and pauperized, remained scattered in the rural districts. Their productive capacity was subjugated to capitalist exploitation quantitatively. So long as the economic exploitation of the country could be kept a monopoly of imperialist capital, the concentration of the propertyless workers in modern industrial centres did not take place. But at last the native capital began to make itself felt. It refused to remain forever in the fetters of usury, petty-trading, landholding and speculation. It wanted industrial expansion and all the efforts of imperialist capital could not prevent it any longer.

With the advent of native capital in the field of modern machinery, began the period of social redistribution of the people. British capital wanted the Indian worker to foresake his independent craft and dedicate himself exclusively to the production of raw material for the British industries. To do this work, it was necessary for him to be held in the village, labouring on the soil. But this method of exploitation was not suitable to the interests of the native capitalist class. The latter did not enjoy the advantage of holding the British workers in his factories to produce surplus values for him. The toilers of India engaged in the production of raw material, supplied the British capitalist with labour-power which supplemented that of the British proletariat, tied to the machine that manufactured commodities from these raw products. But to the Indian capitalist, the labour-power of the Indian worker only in its supplementary capacity was not enough, because he did not possess big industry to be supplemented by the labour of the land-toiler. So the labour-power of a man in the city was more necessary to the Indian capitalist than that of a man in the village. Or in other words, the normal process of the industrial revolution, impeded by a form of exploitation suitable for imperialism, began to assert itself with the rise of Indian industrial capital. British capital accomplished the destructive part of the industrial revolution in India, but prevented the constructive phase of it till, under its own regime, the native bourgeoisie rose to build the modern India on the ruins of the old, whose hollow skeleton had been preserved by the foreign ruler, in conjunction with the native conservatives.

Though the first power-driven factory owned by native capital was built in Bombay in the year 1851, it was not until the eighties of the last century that the real industrialization of the country began. In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, a revolution in the movement of the population became quite marked. Several large cities had come into existence with their industrial centres, where a considerable number of workers were attracted from the villages. Since the industrial revolution in India was obstructed by a foreign agency, and the normal play of social forces was disturbed, the industrial centres of modern India did not grow in the same districts where, in the early days, had flourished the towns inhabited by a rich trading and prosperous artisan class. Thus we find, that while traditionally Bengal used to be the centre of India's cotton-textile industry in former days, the modern cotton industry developed in another part of the country. And in the place of the cotton industry around Calcutta, the capital of Bengal, grew the modern factories for pressing, spinning and weaving jute. Modern industrial centres with a proletarian population began to develop since the last decades of the past century. But the native capitalists had to go through a protracted struggle with the foreign ruler before they could build modern industries to any considerable extent. Therefore, during the thirty years from 1880 to 1910, the growth of modern industrial centres in India was rather slow. The number of toilers living on wages accumulated in urban centres still remained very small. Nevertheless, a considerable number of workers had been concentrated in the factory towns of Bombay and Bengal even in the closing years of the last century. Most of these workers were unskilled, fresh from the village to which they were still bound by family ties or the fascination of a miserable piece of land, heavily encumbered with debt. The city worker of modern India did not come out of the ranks of expropriated artisans; he came mostly from the peasantry. After having lost his trade, the artisan was pushed back to the land, where he had come to stay two or three generations before the call of modern industry brought him again to the city. The normal course of industrial development was obstructed in India. Industry did not grow through the successive phases of handicraft, manufacture, small factory, machino-facture, and then mass-production. So the Indian worker has not been trained in industry. He lacks the proletarian tradition. The presence of a vast number of pauperized population in the country makes the economic condition of the industrial worker of the city very uncertain. Not having had the traditional industrial training, the factory worker of India is generally unskilled. All these factors taken together make the comparatively new industrial proletariat of India a loosely-knit mass of wage-slaves thrown suddenly into new environments, which are more pressing, more nauseating, more unbearable than their village homes, where they toiled and starved and which they have abandoned in quest of a more comfortable one but recently.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, and specially during the last half-dozen years, there has been a steady influx of workers from the village to the city. This movement of population is due to the growth of modern industries. The population of old industrial cities has swelled, and other urban districts have been industrialized. The working population of these industrial centres is mostly drawn from the ranks of the poor peasantry and agricultural proletariat. The growth of the new industrial cities having been rather sudden, the housing conditions of the workers is indescribably horrible. The cost of living is much higher in the towns than in the village. The needs, however modest, of a townsman are again more than those of a villager. Thus, after coming to the city in quest of a more comfortable life, the worker becomes disillusioned. Discontent follows disillusionment. In the village he did not feel the exploitation as keenly as he does in his new environment. The struggle for life is harder and more acute in the city. Here, he misses the carefreeness of rural life; and the mutual sympathy that characterizes the sufferers in the isolated villages is smothered in the bustles of a commercial city. But the activity of an urban environment infuses new energy in the worker, who but a short time ago was a patient toiler on the land, accepting his hard lot as ordained by providence. This traditional passivity receives a jolt in the city. The glaring inequalities of wealth and comfort, in contradistinction with the merciless intensity of exploitation of man by man disturbs his mental calm. The spirit of resignation, instilled in him by the teaching of religion during the ages, begins to be ruffled. He can no longer help doubting whether everything is for good, as he has been taught to believe.

Of course on the other hand, the first disillusionment in the city arouses in the worker the desire to go back to his village home. But it is not always so easy to do a thing as to want it. Often he lacks the wherewithal to pay his passage back to the far-off village. Then he actually does receive more cash money than he could ever get or hope to get in the village. The scandalously low wages of a factory worker are handsome in comparison with the dole received by an agricultural worker. And the poor peasant has never enjoyed the blessed sensation of slipping in his pocket a handful of coins, even if they may be of copper, without the apprehension that one or another of his innumerable creditors would be presently coming to take them away from him. In the town, he earns his wages, however small, and spends them as he likes. This is not a mean temptation to resist. To return to the village, allured by the fresh air, would be at the cost of the newly-earned freedom of naked wage-slavery, which is to a human being more exhilarating than the drudgery of village life. Indeed there are cases of returning to the old home. But these are rare, and only those few who happen to have their families still in the villages, go back. In cases of long-protracted strikes also, a number of the strikers go back to the villages, because it is impossible for them to live in the city without work. The strikes being spontaneous and the trade-unions being new, the workers are also utterly without any income during the strikes. The wages are so low that the worker begins to starve in the second week of unemployment. Therefore, after having starved as long as he can, the worker naturally feels inclined towards returning to the village where he can get a morsel from either the parents, or relations, or somebody else. But this tendency is on the decline as the result of the growth of unionism. Practical experience also tends to discourage the workers from returning to the village once they are in the city. Very few leave the village home on their own choosing; they are driven out by economic pressure. On his return to the village having been in the city for some time, the worker finds the place left by him occupied by somebody else. The town life has awakened new visions and new desires in him, which cannot be satisfied in the hackneyed village life. In the city, the last remnants of the caste bonds have been shaken off him, so on returning to the village he finds himself an outcaste. The recent exodus of the Assam Tea Plantation workers under the instigation of the non-cooperation agitators ended in disaster. Thousands of workers returned to their villages after years of absence, to find that there was no room for them there. The land they used to till had been occupied and leased to some other by the moneylender; the life in the plantations had completely freed them from those hollow caste prejudices that still hold good in the villages; and if they were underpaid and ill-treated in the plantations, starvation and destitution greeted them on their return to the village.

The Secretary of the Railway, Mining, and Paper-mill Worker's Union, who accompanied a batch of repatriated plantation workers to their villages makes the following statement:

> I found that the repatriation of the coolies had practically resulted in sending them to death. Most of the returning emigrants had no home, no lands. Many of them had been born in the tea gardens and did not even know the name of their villages. At least 60 per cent of the returning emigrants have no distinct caste, having inter-married with the Chamars (the lowest caste). The village people absolutely refused to have anything to do with them, and even denied entrance into the village to men who actually had houses still standing. The villagers themselves find it difficult to keep themselves from starvation, and therefore, feeding the returned coolies is an impossibility. In the villages there are no industries in which these men might be employed, nor any kind of work can be found for the day labourers. It is futile to bring away the coolies from the gardens and send them to the villages, from which 50 to 60 men are leaving daily for the tea-gardens owing to the famine conditions prevailing there. Strikes never succeed if the strikers leave, as their places are easily taken by others.

It is true on account of their youth and the comparative weakness of capitalist organization, many factories in the new industrial centres of India work rather spasmodically. They do not offer steady employment to a given number of hands all round the year. Consequently, the workers in such factories are still in a state of semi-proletarianization; because a part of the year they have to go back to the villages, the city failing to employ them. But development of capitalist organization and the improvement of industrial production are rapidly changing the situation. The causes for the fluctuation in the urban working class are being speedily removed. The modern towns of India are bound to grow at the cost of the villages. Primitive agriculture no longer suits the scheme of capitalist exploitation, neither of the imperialist nor of the native bourgeoisie. The Indian worker must produce more; and he cannot do so with the ploughshare. Indian labour power must be supplemented by machine-power. So the economic life of India, which more than a century and a half ago was pushed back to the village from the town of the trader and guildsman, is being shifted to the city of the capitalist and industrial proletariat. The urbanization of Indian labour began 40 years ago. In the earlier days, the process went on rather slowly owing to the hostility of the imperialist capital; but during the last ten years all bonds have been broken, and many large industrial cities have come into existence accumulating large masses of proletariat. It is several years since the latter has ceased to be the docile Indian toilers of tradition. New material conditions have aroused new energy, new aspiration, new spirit in them. The will to resist has taken the place of resignation. In short, the worker of the industrial cities of modern India is a powerful social factor. He may not be fully conscious of his vital position as yet; he may be still unable to wield his power in the right way; he may still, occasionally, fall victim to the lingering religious and social prejudices, but he can no longer be ignored. Any social or political movement that fails to count on him runs a great danger, because he stands at the vanguard of the forces on which the economic life of the nation depends, and this vanguard will soon become conscious of the historic role it is destined to play.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Proletariat

3. *Present Condition and Future*

The number of industrial wage-earners in 1911 was 17,515,230 making a total population of 35,323,041 with their families and dependents as against about 15,000,000 (33,000,000, with families) in 1899. While we take into consideration the fact that during the intervening period the rural craft industries dwindled, it becomes apparent that the number of workers employed in modern industries must have increased proportionately, since the total number of industrial wage-earners showed a rise. This number did not include the workers employed in transport and domestic services. The number engaged in these two were 2,394,800 and 2,725,856 respectively, making a total population of 10,628,058 including families and dependents. About 15 per cent of the entire body of industrial wage-earners was employed in modern machine-industries. But a large portion of those engaged in handicrafts were also drawn to the towns, since their industries depended on the urban population or export trade. For example, the majority of the building workers lived in the towns; so also was the case with the carpenters and furniture workers, dress and toilet makers.

Thus while on one hand, the artisan class of the old towns was ruined economically and was absorbed in the ranks of the pauperized peasantry or land-workers after having been driven out of their urban homes, on the other hand, a new class of industrial wage-earners employed in craft industry, was coming into existence in the modern cities. This new class of handicraft workers rested on a different social basis. They were not independent artisans owning their tools, but wage-slaves; in their respective trade and profession they were not bound by the caste laws; and as an economic factor, they formed a part of the modern capitalist system. They were accumulated in cities owing to the growth of the latter. During the first decade of the present century the building industry in the towns had increased twofold and the furniture industry had grown ten times. This was due to the migration of the rural population to the cities, thus creating need for more housing accommodation. With the exception of hand-weaving and spinning, employing about 3,500,000 workers, all other craft industries of any importance, are in the towns.

The forcible penetration of foreign capital destroyed the equilibrium in the old system of national economy. It pushed the productive forces backwards; by preventing the growth of machine-industry it drove the semi-proletarianized craftsmen back to agriculture. But, as the inevitable consequence of capitalist exploitation, towns had to grow; and the new towns created their new industrial workers. At first these industrial workers were employed in small factories run more or less on handicraft basis; but small-scale production could not prosper in a society reduced to the exploitation of industrial capital. Therefore, thanks to the rise of the modern bourgeoisie and its entrance into the industrial field, all the industrial wage-earners of the modern towns are being concentrated in large factories. This social re-adjustment has been greatly helped by the unexpected economic and industrial situation created by the war, which gave the Indian bourgeoisie the opportunity to increase the dimensions of the native capitalist industry. The rapidity with which the Indian bourgeoisie developed in the last ten years has been shown in the first chapter. In consequence of this sudden industrial development, the growth of large cities has been accentuated proportionately. For instance, the pressure of population has been so enormous in Calcutta that the price of land went up 350 per cent during the last six years; and house rent has increased by 200 per cent.

The classified reports of the census of 1920 are not yet available; but it is shown by other sources of information that the number of industrial workers employed in large capitalist concerns is more than 9,000,000 at the present time, as against a little over 3,000,000 before the war. It is estimated that 4.5 per cent of the total population is today employed in the three principal industries namely, transport, textile, and mining. That is, the number of workers in these industries is 14,000,000. The portion of these particular industries still left to handicraft is not considerable. Therefore, the total number of proletariat can be reasonably put further above the estimated figure of 9,000,000. In any case, compared with the vastness of the total population, the numerical strength of the proletariat cannot be called very great. But what should be remarked is not the actual number existing at the present moment, but the process of growth of the proletarian class. The primal industry of the country viz, agriculture, has been overburdened for a long time; the number of people depending on wages derived from this industry is too large to be borne by it under any condition; there are in the country tens of millions of people without any means of livelihood worth the name. Therefore it is but natural that a heavy migration from the village to the town will immediately follow the growth of modern large-scale industry offering employment. This redistribution of the population will inevitably bring in with it new orientation in the political life of the nation.

Imperialism reduced the toilers of the country to the economic state of wage-slavery, but by denying the native capital the opportunity of exploiting the workers with the aid of modern means of production, the class differentiation of the society was kept rather confused. The rise of a national bourgeoisie, followed by the increasing exploitation of the workers by native capital, has broken the social stagnation. Proletarianization of the Indian worker has begun, and the Indian society cannot be spared the inevitable consequences. It will be shown presently that these consequences have begun to make themselves felt since several years ago.

The following list gives the principal industries with the approximate number of workers employed: Cotton and jute-textile (machine-driven) 1,300,000; Transport (including railways, tramways and river steam navigation) 1,200,000; Mining, 800,000; Plantations, 900,000; Engineering and metal works, 150,000; Rice, flour, oil, paper and saw mills, 150,000; Cotton-ginning and jute bailing, 100,000; Printing press, 150,000; Dockyard and ship-building, 200,000; Marine transport, 300,000; Building, 1,900,000; Tanneries and leather works, 50,000; Sugar, 120,000; Arms and ammunition factories, 100,000; Tobacco factories, 38,000; Petroleum Refineries, 40,000; Gas and Electric works, 50,000. Other industries employing a smaller number of workers are rubber works, tinning and packing, pottery, cutlery, chemical, pencil, sheet-metal, sporting goods, etc., etc. Then there are about a million furniture workers living in towns, engaged in capitalist factories. The number of workers employed in urban-mechanical factories can, thus, be estimated at 7,000,000. To these should be added the masses of non-industrial workers accumulated in the large cities, whose number can also be counted in millions. The urban non-industrial workers include domestic servants, carriage drivers, street sweepers, other municipal employees, porters, carriers etc., etc. These unskilled workers are also employed enmasse and live on the outskirts of the towns in conditions absolutely revolting. Then we have already seen the economic condition of the petty intellectual wage-earner. In short, the large commercial cities are populated mostly by propertyless wage-slaves of different categories, but belonging to the same social class.

Since the modern machine industry of India has not been built gradually on the background of craft industries, the proletariat, until recently was a mass of unskilled labourers. Machine-industry, built in India with English capital, usually employed skilled workers imported from the home country. The absence of Indian workers grown up in machine-environment with a mechanical training, obliged the British capitalist to import skilled workers from England even if he had to pay comparatively high wages to these workers.

Gradually, the latter proved to be a rather useful member of the exploiting class. Working men, wage-slaves themselves, these imported skilled labourers ceased to feel themselves workers as soon as they landed in India, readily getting absorbed into the class of colonial overlords. Thus the working class employed in Indian industries remained divided into two sections, far removed from each other. The first section, that is the British labour aristocrats, rendered the capitalist great help in exploiting the more numerous second, that is the native unskilled workers. The latter continued to be so miserably underpaid that the employer could well afford to pay handsome salaries to the former in recompense for the valuable colonial services rendered by them. Being unskilled and extremely exploited, the Indian industrial workers were not always steady in their urban occupations. The permanent pressure of a huge unemployed mass always made the economic position of the unskilled industrial labourer very insecure. They never became vital to the industry, which could at any emergency throw them out in favour of new recruits from the unemployed reserve force. Thus it happened that till 15 years ago, when the first big strike of the railway workers took place, the wages of the Indian industrial workers stayed stationary. In the early years of the twentieth century, the average wages of the urban worker was half a pound a month. Since then, the rise in the wage scale has not been more than 100 per cent whereas the cost of living has gone up 300 per cent only in course of the last 4 years.

The economic condition of the Indian industrial worker is horrible. He is much worse off than the workers of any other civilized country. It is dangerous to draw parallels in history; but it could be said that the social readjustment felt in Europe, and especially in England, as a result of the Industrial Revolution, has at last come to India. The effect of this readjustment is a certain concentration of workers in the new industrial centres. And this concentration of labour forces in rapidly growing factories has brought in its train untold sufferings. The living condition of the Indian factory worker is intolerable. The sudden concentration of population in the cities has made the housing problem very acute. In most of the large industrial towns no accommodation at all is available for the working people who, therefore, have to dwell in the surrounding villages, often 6 or 8 miles away from where they have to work. The working day is of 12 hours which has only lately been reduced to 11 and in some cases 10. Thus in order to present themselves at the factory at 6, when the work starts, the labourers have to start from their dwelling quarters as early as 4 in the morning. Then again in the evening, utterly exhausted by the long day's hard labour, with what can just as well be called an empty stomach, the worker has to walk the distance back home after leaving the factory at 6. Owing to the lack of cheap suburban transportation, it is necessary to walk this distance twice a day; and even had there been any, his scanty earning would not permit the worker to pay the fare.

As to the condition of the urban workingmen's quarters, when there are any, the following description is taken from the report of the Indian Industrial Commission (1916–18). We take the cases of the two most important and typical industrial cities, namely Calcutta and Bombay. The living condition of the jute mill operatives in the suburbs of Calcutta is pictured as follows:

> We have little doubt that the long hours passed in the uncongenial, if not unhealthy, surroundings of a factory, from which the labourer returns at night to a dirty, crowded and insanitary hovel, where his only relaxation is found in the liquor shop and the bazaar, are most unattractive to a man accustomed to rural life, and it is only the congestion existing in his native district and the desire to earn higher wages that lead him to submit to such conditions.

The slums of Bombay are described by the Industrial Commission as follows:

> The worse type of chawls (tenements) consists of a two, three, or four-storied building, with single room units either placed back to back or separated by a narrow gully (alley) two or three feet wide, usually traversed by an open-air drain. The rooms, especially those on the ground floor, are often pitch dark and possess little in the way of windows. The ground floor is usually damp, owing to an insufficient plinth; the courtyards between the buildings are most undesirably narrow and, therefore, receive insufficient sun and air. They are very dirty. Water arrangements are very insufficient and latrine accommodation bad. A most insanitary smell hangs around these buildings. The rents vary according to the value of the ground. The monthly rent per room is from 3 rupees to 7 rupees, and the rooms themselves are usually 10 feet square. The standard of comfort is so low that the overcrowding entailed by taking in boarders or lodgers is readily tolerated for the sake of contribution to the rent received from them.

The Commission testify to having seen families occupying the same room, and single lodgers living in the same room occupied by one or more families. In the city of Bombay and its immediate surroundings, three-fourths of a million people are living in one-roomed dwellings, described above. Among the urban population of factory workers, the death rate is 60 per thousand, and the infant mortality is 650 per every thousand births.

It is but very recently that the British government has changed its economic policy of obstructing the growth of modern industrialism in India. In order to handicap the working of the new cotton factories and to render their products unable to compete with the imported goods, the Indian Factories Act to 'protect the labouring class' was passed as early as 1881. It happened that the interests of the rising native bourgeoisie and the government were not identical in India in those days. In the early eighties it was not a very rare instance when a worker worked 18 hours a day in the cotton mills. This inhuman practice was not much affected by the government measure; because the officials, who were to enforce the factory regulations, could be easily bought. And the tragedy of the whole situation was that, as in all government departments, these petty native officials helped the rich capitalist to abuse and infringe the laws to protect the poor labourer. The Factory Act of 1881 fixed the maximum working day at 15 hours; but even this did not satisfy the thirst of the employers. The original Act was again amended in 1891 making it more stringent; but with no avail. The brutal exploitation went on until the workers rebelled. In the later nineties a number of strikes took place in the cotton factories of Bombay and Ahmedabad as well as in the jute mills of Calcutta. The situation remained practically unchanged till 1906 when the boycott of foreign goods, declared by the Indian National Congress, gave the first great impetus to the indigenous machine-industry. This impetus was felt very largely in the cotton industry. Mills after mills were erected and the old ones extended. The number of urban workers was suddenly increased. In order to break down the boycott movement, the banks handling the import of Lancashire cotton fabrics, kept on under-selling this commodity during the years of 1906, 1907, 1908. The only available weapon, with which the Indian manufacturers could fight this economic battle, was the cheap and unorganized labour. They made such an inhumanly excessive use of this weapon that the situation became scandalous, and in 1908 the government, which thrives on the exploitation of the Indian masses, appointed a Commission of Enquiry to investigate the condition of factory labour and recommend means of improving it. In its report published in 1911, the Commission says: 'The hours of labour are excessive, being from 14 to 22 per day. Sanitary provision is gravely defective in most factories'. One witness, of practical experience, stated: 'Any man would feel exhausted even if he merely sat in a chair in some of the work rooms for eight or ten hours, the atmosphere was so foul'.

On the recommendation of the Commission of Enquiry, the Indian Factories Act was amended in 1911. The new legislation established a maximum 13 hour day for men, 11 hour for women and children, with a thirty-minute break for a meal in the middle of the day. But in practice very little improvement was made in the life of the factory worker by the new legislation. The fact that the overwhelming majority of the Indian workers was unskilled and that, owing to the existence of a hungry mass of unemployed, it was long before they could begin to organize themselves, made them helpless victims of the employing class. The abuse of child labour was particularly brutal. In short, the harrowing scenes that followed the Industrial Revolution in England were repeated in India, in spite of her much-vaunted spiritual civilization. And the extortion of labour was the most scandalous and disgraceful in the cotton-factories of Bombay, owned mostly by native capital.

Indian factory production was originally modelled on the English system which gives a privileged position to the skilled workers. With the rapid development of capitalism, the American method of standardized mass-production is, however, gaining preference of late. Until a few years ago, the Indian factory workers were divided into the widely separated classes of skilled and unskilled. There were very few Indians in the first class, which was almost exclusively reserved for 'imported' English mechanics and engineers. The monopoly was quite complete in the railways and other industries owned by the state or foreign capitalists. In the textile industries, the skilled weavers were mostly native. But all the responsible positions, and especially those belonging to the mechanical branch, were held by Europeans who, on account of the disproportionately high wages and treatment they received, could by no means be recognized as members of the proletarian class. But the Indian skilled workers did not enjoy such a privileged position, either in wages or in treatment. The only advantage they had over their unskilled colleagues was that their employment was not so unsteady as that of the latter, because it was not so easy to find skilled weavers, carpenters, moulders, designers etc., to replace the ones under employment. The native craftsmen, in spite of their knowledge of the trade, could not readily handle the mechanical tools; and to employ European workers would increase the cost of production enormously. Thus, while in the earlier years of the twentieth century, the unskilled urban workers were still but a mass of fluctuating wage earners not altogether divorced from their village bonds, there had come into existence, nevertheless, a class of skilled workers domiciled permanently in the city and dependent exclusively on industrial wages.

In 1910 the numerical strength of this class of pure proletariat was about 1,000,000, that is nearly 50 per cent of the total number of urban factory labourers of that time. The European element in this skilled labouring class numbered 15,000 employed in factories and 80,000 employed on the railways—traffic and workshops included. The number of European skilled factory workers has increased since then; last year in the cotton mills of the province of Bombay alone

23,000 of them were employed. But, on the other hand, the English monopoly over the field of skilled mechanical work in the transport and other industries owned by the government and British companies, has been broken. The number of Indians employed in these branches has increased considerably. This change was forced by war conditions. The import of skilled workers from England had to be stopped, and Indian industries, extended and placed on a war basis for the production of military supplies, needed an additional number of skilled workers. Thus, native workers had to be admitted into the heavens of expert mechanical positions, so far reserved for the workers belonging to the ruling nationality. This process brought the Indian closer to the machine, and therefore, proportionately farther from the village life and traditions. Consequently, the number of industrial wage earners domiciled in the towns, divorced from all connection with the village, increased.

Before the war, the textile industry, owned mostly by native capital, had to import foreign mechanical and engineering workers from abroad along with foreign machines. The obstructed growth of machine-industry had prevented the rise of a class of expert mechanics among the Indian proletariat. This obligation to employ highly paid English mechanics constituted a heavy burden on the industry. But in spite of their desire to get rid of this burden, the native capitalists went on employing the imported experts in order to maintain the efficiency of the factories. The war conditions told on this practice also; and the mechanical jobs in the textile industries were opened to the native workers.

It is generally held that Indian labour in machine-industries falls short of the required standard of efficiency. Evidence is not lacking to prove that, in spite of the miserably low scale of wages, Indian labour can produce as cheaply as the Western workers. The comparatively inferior stage of organization, in which the Indian capitalist industry found itself until recently and the unspeakably bad living conditions together with the artificially forced low standard of comfort of the Indian workers, are the causes of the small productivity of Indian labour in spite of the low wages. The Industrial Commission (1916–18) arrived at the following conclusion on the subject:

> It is true that the inferior physique and tropical conditions contribute to this state of affairs (low rate of production), but there is great reason to believe that the former is to some extent the result of preventible disease, whilst other causes, which are even more obviously remediable, are factors that unnecessarily increase the difficulties of our labour problem.

Major White, M. D., of the Indian Medical Service, said: 'A large part of the relative inefficiency of Indian labour is due to removable pathological causes'. Indian employers, lacking a long experience in driving large herds of wage-slaves, still believe in the antiquated theory and practice of paying the least possible wages. But the wrong economics of this practice is beginning to dawn upon them. The steady and uninterrupted growth of industry requires a settled class of urban workers; and the prevailing intolerable condition in which the factory labourer has to live in the towns, is not very conducive to make him forget the village, with which he still maintains more or less connection. Of course, it is no longer practically possible for the entire body of urban workers to go back to the village, thus leaving the modern industrial centres utterly deserted. But what actually happens is a constant fluctuation in the working population, the movement back and forth between the village and the town. This in itself is very prejudicial to the productivity of the industry. So, of late, there has arisen a movement, backed by the new economic policy of the government, to increase the housing capacity of the large industrial centres, in order that the working people can be accommodated near the factories. These housing facilities have been good for completing the proletarianization of the city workers, because large numbers are settled in the towns once for all. But the condition in which they find themselves in their new environment is horrible. Driven from their holding on the soil, separated once for all from the village life and traditions, and rudely disillusioned in their pilgrimage to the shrine of urban industry in quest of higher wages, the Indian proletariat is bound to develop the psychology of its class, and it is doing so amazingly fast.

The relation which the Indian city worker maintained with the village until recently and still maintains to a certain extent, though to a diminishing degree, has its effects on the rural wage-earners. The discontent aroused in him by the sight of glaring inequalities between the poor and the rich in the cities, is carried with him to the village and contributes to disturbing the resignation of the rural toiler. Coming to the cities, the worker finds out that he has been living a life not of a human being, but an animal; he sees how many things of necessity and comfort have been denied to him; his desire to live and enjoy is aroused; he becomes indignant at having been deprived of many things that are within the reach of the people living in the towns. He goes back to the village, but his new spirit does not die in him. On the contrary, it contaminates the inarticulate masses in the rural districts, and arouses in them the desire to go themselves to the cities. The result is an increased migration from the village to the town. Even those who come back from the cities, return thither with new comrades. Thus is growing a new social force motivated by the changed economic condition of a large section of the people. The economic basis of the country has been changed; the corresponding redistribution of the population is inevitable. The social equilibrium has been disturbed. A process of readjustment must follow. With all their traditional resignation and apathy, the wage earners cannot any longer stay and starve in the villages. The small-scale, backward agriculture cannot provide them with employment. The attractions of city life are felt in the remotest corner of the country. The wage-slaves must flock thither. And the concentration of a numerous social class doomed to the same misery will inevitably give rise to a situation impregnated with revolutionary possibilities. The signs are already very manifest. The revolt of the wage-slave against the propertied rich is rocking the country. The nationalist preoccupation can no longer calm it down. Side by side with the national struggle, which is assuming alarming proportions, the class struggle is also developing. The modern bourgeoisie, which is leading the national struggle, could not have come into existence and power without bringing in its train the other side of the social picture, namely the proletariat, which in its turn must initiate and lead the struggle for the emancipation of the exploited class. The class struggle is raging in India simultaneously with the struggle for national liberation.

Whether nationalist preoccupations—the historic necessity for political independence of the Indian people—will be sufficient for keeping the class struggle in the background indefinitely, is to be judged by the actual class differentiation in the present social organism and by the possibility of this differentiation growing wider. A comparative study of the economic condition of the different classes of the society is helpful for making this judgement. Since the entire Indian people is under the exploitation of a foreign imperialism, it is true that until about half a century ago, no social class had any considerably great wealth accumulated in its hands. On the contrary, in the early days of the British rule, the riches of the upper class were exploited and taken out of the country. For more than a century, the propertied class was not allowed the freedom of investing their wealth in profitable means of exploitation. Generally speaking, this brought down the economic condition of the entire nation approximately to the same level. National exploitation was naturally followed by national pauperization. But this abnormal economic equilibrium could not be maintained forever. In course of time, it was disturbed, and class exploitation within the structure of the exploited nation became a social phenomenon. The rise of the modern bourgeoisie in India has been traced in the first chapter; the pauperization and destitution of the peasantry has been shown in the second; now we will see that in recent years the enrichment of the capitalist class has caused impoverishment of the proletariat.

Let us take one industry, namely the textile, in which by far the largest amount of Indian capital is invested and which employs a considerable part of the city proletariat. In spite of the fact that this industry was not very small in that period, the companies owning cotton mills in the last decade of the past century could not pay more than 6 per cent, 7 per cent dividend; in 1907–1908, in spite of the prosperity resulting from the boycott movement of 1906, the rate of dividend did not rise any further than 15 per cent. But in recent years, the profit made in the same industry has been increasing enormously. According to the Bombay Stock Exchange List of 1919, the dividend paid by the cotton mills exceeded 25 per cent. There were at least three mills paying 40 per cent, two paying 50 per cent and 4 others paid 56 per cent, 70 per cent, 100 per cent and 120 per cent respectively. Considering the fact that the capital invested as well as the total productivity of the textile industry has increased tremendously since 1919, it is to be deduced that the rate and amount of profit must have gone up in proportion. In 1918 the companies possessing jute mills paid to the shareholders an average of 20 per cent or double the rate of the previous year. The profit from the jute mills has increased very much since then. (For the increased rate of profit in Indian industries vide Chap. I).

A look at the other side of the picture makes the class cleavage of Indian society quite manifest. According to the evidence recorded by the Industrial Commission, the wages of the Bombay cotton mill operatives in 1918 ranged from 15 shillings and 10 pence to £3.2s. 7d. per month. The wages in the Calcutta jute mills were from 12 shillings to £2, and the average wages of the workers in the Bengal coal fields was 19 shillings per month. In the same year (1918), the cost of living had gone up 200 per cent. The price of foodgrains was 175 per cent wholesale and 400 per cent retail more than in the pre-war period. But the wages had hardly been improved, the average rate of increase having been not more than 25 per cent. This unbearable economic burden exhausted the patience of the workers, and the result was the food-riots and the strike-movement which during the last three years affected every class of workers including those toiling on the land. By its three years' struggle for economic betterment—a struggle much abused, dissipated and misled by the bourgeois-nationalists—the Indian proletariat has succeeded in securing an average 50 per cent increase in the wages, while the profit of the capitalist during the same period has grown much more, in proportion as well as in total amount.

The rise in the scale of average wages in the cotton industry is as follows:

Year	1895	1914	1918	1920
Wages per month	Rs. 14.5	18.5	21	24

The lowest scale of wages for unskilled labour was 7 rupees in 1915 and 8 in 1920 and the highest for the expert weaver was 36 and 40 rupees respectively. The scale of wages in the same industry in another province, viz. Madras, was as follows:

Year	1895	1914	1918	1920
Wages per month	Rs. 9.5	17	21	25.5

The wages in the jute industry of Bengal showed the following scale of increase:

Year	1895	1914	1918	1920
Wages per month	Rs. 11.8	16.5	17	23.5

The increase in the wages of the workers employed in the engineering industry has been as follows over the unit of 1880:

Year	Skilled	Unskilled
1914	11%	7%
1918	13%	7.5%
1920	15%	9%

The railway wages rose in the following scale. The rate of 1880 is taken for the unit:

Year	Skilled	Unskilled
1914	18%	5.7%
1918	20%	7.5%
1920	25.33%	9%

The average scale in several other principal industries taken together showed the following rate of increase:

Year	1895	1914	1918	1920
Wages per month	9	18.3	19	25

From the above abstract figures it is evident that in all the industries, the percentage of increase in the wages has been more during the last period, that is, between 1918 and 1920. Remembering the fact that it was during this period of two years that the strike movement among the Indian proletariat became very strong and widespread, it is concluded that this meagre improvement in their economic condition was secured by the efforts of the workers themselves. Therefore it is natural that the Indian proletariat, however ignorant, however undeveloped they may be still, could not help learning from the experience of the last three years that they must fight to earn the right to live as human beings. They have also found out that in this struggle, they have to face the opposition of the native as well as the foreign employer, and that in case of emergency, the two do not hesitate to join forces in spite of the national struggle that makes them enemies otherwise.

The wages and living conditions of the working class vary so much from one part of the country to the other that one cannot get a clear idea about the situation from the average wage-scale in the principal industries. In fact, the actual income of nearly 80 per cent of the workers falls considerably below the average quoted above. For example, the daily earning of a miner in the coal fields of Bengal is seven annas, which is equivalent to 8 pence. With this he can hardly buy his food, not to take into account his family, housing and other primary necessities. The wages in the plantations are still worse, the average being as follows:

Year		1914	1919
Men	Rupees	6.2	6.35
Women		4.68	5.15
Children		2.9	3.15

The average wages of an unskilled urban labourer is 9 rupees per month. This buys not more than 90 pounds of food grains at the prevailing price. In order to have at least one full meal a day for himself and for his family, which averages two or three persons with very little earning capacity, he needs not less than 120 pounds of foodgrains alone. Then there are other expenses which he must meet.

Such are the conditions under which the workers in the Indian cities live and labour. The cash payment they receive in the towns is indeed more than they used to get in the villages and more than the unskilled rural labourer still gets. Therefore, in spite of the wretchedness of the city life and the practically lower economic value of the wages earned there, urban employment offers a lure to the village toiler who wants to run away from the never to-be-broken bonds of indebtedness and the hopeless drudgery of primitive rural life. Once in the city, his life is not by any means bettered; but the division of the society between the rich few and the poor many becomes manifest to him. In the village everybody seemed to be poor; everybody lived approximately the same kind of life; the sight of somebody benefiting by the labour of others is more vivid in the city than in the village. These factors act quickly on the psychology of the workers herded around the factories in horrible condition. Thus, notwithstanding their still existing ties with the village, their ignorance, lingering religious prejudices and the traditional spirit of resignation—the most baneful product of the much-vaunted Indian culture—the proletariat is forced to develop fighting qualities. The Indian worker has declared the class war, apparently unconscious of what he is engaged in. Under the regime of capitalist exploitation, Indian society stood divided into two classes since long ago. The cleavage has been growing wider and wider with the development of the native bourgeoisie. But the rise of modern industrial centres with their army of wage-slaves has brought the situation to a point where the cold facts have to be faced. They can no longer be softened by sentiment nor clouded by nationalist preoccupations.

That the unbearable economic conditions are making the patient Indian workers learn the necessity of fighting for their interest, and that this awakening of the labouring masses is no longer unnoticed by the upper classes of the society is shown by the discussion on the 'Labour Problem' which is capturing the attention of the press as well as the platform. We quote below extracts from a typical article on the subject published in *The Hindu* of Madras, a nationalist journal of the conservative school. The article was titled 'The Labour Crisis—A Gloomy Outlook'.

> The labour crisis in Madras is but the forerunner of what is in store for us in the future. I have observed with keen interest the first symptoms of the awakening intelligence throughout the country. In one word it is showing itself in the form of restlessness. The silent suffering and the stolid contentment of the poor and labouring classes have given way to a vehement desire to share the comforts of life with the well-to-do classes above them, the members of which are setting a bad example to the lower classes. . . . The wheel of fortune in the villages has turned; the ancient simplicity of the village life has disappeared. The labouring classes have learned by silent suffering, helped by the instinct for self-preservation, to outwit their tyrants and masters by using the very same methods they have so long been practising to filch them out of their honest dues.

The writer goes on describing at length the revolutionary changes that are taking place in the rural life; how the old caste divisions are breaking down and the society is getting divided into two classes, viz. rich and poor; and how the latter are losing their traditional virtues and becoming turbulent. He remarks: 'They (workers) suffer and cherish a strong dislike to the class which has compassed their ruin through quarrels and litigations, which are the village editions of the imperial "divide and rule policy".'

So much for the pious alarm of the respectable bourgeoisie which is shocked at the impudence of the lowly. But the real strength and character of the awakening of the Indian working class, urban as well as rural, are indicated by the strike movement of the last several years. The rebelliousness of the workers has added great potentiality to the struggle for national freedom. In the din of political fights, the economic struggle of the working class has been drowned; economic strikes have been invariably transformed into premature political ones; but to an observer with an understanding of the social forces, this complexity of affairs cannot confuse the great outstanding motive behind it all. The working class, and particularly the city proletariat, has begun to fight for its economic betterment, and signs are not lacking that before very long, the conscious desire for social emancipation will not remain beyond its mental outlook.

Ever since the class of city workers existed in India, the strike has not been an altogether unknown affair. But so long as the numerical strength of this class remained insignificant and the large majority of the workers were unskilled, strikes were very few and far between. Indian workers employed in modern industries were mostly unskilled until 10 or 12 years ago, and the permanent presence of a huge army of unemployed in the country constituted a standing menace to the steadiness of the factory worker's job. Under such circumstances, the only consequence of a strike would be the summary dismissal of the strikers, who could be replaced by new men at a moment's notice and at even lower wages. Thus, although there occurred strikes of the cotton-mill operatives of Bombay in the later years of the nineties, of the railway-workers in 1906, of the coal miners around the same year, of the Calcutta jute-mill workers in 1907 etc., the economic struggle of the working class did not take sufficiently organized and powerful form till 1917. In this year, the war conditions had on the one hand, given a tremendous impetus to the machine-industry in India, while on the other, they had pushed the cost of living several times higher. The number of workers accumulated and settled in the industrial centres had greatly increased; the proportion of skilled workmen among the Indian labourers had also increased. Owing to the sudden growth of industries, the towns were horribly congested and the housing condition was scandalous. The wages were so low that the workers could hardly buy anything with them. Such a situation could not help creating discontent, which was first expressed in the form of food riots. Shops were looted by hungry work-people. The food riots were quelled with the aid of armed forces.

Unable to drag along any longer in their unbearable existence—unorganized, practically leaderless—the workers of the textile industry found the first weapon of the class-war. They instinctively learned to strike. The first strikes were declared in the latter part of 1917, and within the course of but a few months, no less than 120,000 workers took part in the same strike, tying up simultaneously a number of factories in several towns. The demand was for higher wages and shorter hours, which were granted to a certain extent. Since then strikes followed upon strikes, and the year 1918 found the entire country seething with labour unrest. Out of the strike movement were born labour organizations. Trade unions were organized by the workers in various industries. The class war became more naked. Even when forced to concede to the strike-demands, the capitalists refused to recognize the unions as legitimate bodies. The government endorsed the attitude of the employers, many of whom were Indians and not a few belonging to the nationalist movement. Recognition of the right of collective bargaining was included in the strike-demands. By the middle of 1918, 'participation in the control of industry' was included in the demands of several strikes.

The story of the strike-wave that swept the country during the years from 1918 to 1920 is a history by itself. It needs special study; but lack of sufficient reliable material precludes our entering it at length. Suffice it to say that, side by side with the national struggle, the class struggle has also been developing. In the short space of four years, trade unionism has made great progress in India. It shows that the Indian proletariat has been very quick in understanding the necessity of its class organism to fight for economic interests. In the earlier days of the movement, when almost every stike was followed by turbulent disturbances created by the workers, the nationalist leaders suddenly found in it a very good weapon to be used for the purposes of demonstration. Very soon all the strikers were led and organized by nationalist leaders, who in their enthusiasm, tried to read a political character in the economic struggle of the working class. This led to the disasters of the Punjab, Bombay and other places in 1919. But the bloody baptism under nationalist leadership did not damp the spirit of the rebellious wage-slaves. What did happen was, that the failure of the bourgeois-nationalist to understand the real significance of the labour unrest, prevented him from leading it into the right channel. Consequently, the leadership of organized labour began to pass into the control of conservative reformists and government agents. Nevertheless, mass action still remains the backbone of the national struggle; and the masses are pushed on to the revolutionary ranks not so much by national enthusiasm, as by the instinct for self-preservation, which is the mother of the struggle for economic emancipation.

That the struggle of the proletariat is an affair distinct from the national movement and that what the Indian worker is really fighting for is freedom from his age-long economic bondage and social ostracism, can be seen from the innumerable strikes organized and led by the Unions. Today we find hundreds of thousands of workers all over the country, fighting with grim determination the battles of economic emancipation with the capitalist class, irrespective of nationality. How far the sense of solidarity and will to fight have progressed among the Indian proletariat can be judged from the following picture of the 50,000 textile workers of Madras who were locked-out for more than three months. The government extended full aid to the employers in their efforts to break down the resistance of the workers, who were terrorized and prosecuted in every conceivable way. A correspondent gives the following description of the spirit of the workers after 10 weeks of struggle and starvation:

> One sees in the faces of these workers, when they assemble in thousands in their union premises every evening, a deep and silent determination to carry on the struggle in spite of all the brutal devices that are now being practised to cowe them down to obedience and break the strike. "Are you down-hearted?" The answer "no" uttered by thousands of voices sends a thrill of joy among the vast assembly. But only a few can realize the real sufferings and privations of these brave people. Here is an example of endurance and suffering perhaps unparalleled in the strike phenomena of recent times, and which is destined to have far-reaching results all over the labour world. Still stubborn, still peaceful, still determined to endure and to suffer for their economic emancipation.

About a year ago, the labour unrest became so acute and widespread that the government found it necessary to recognize it as a problem separate from the general national movement. Commissions were appointed to investigate the causes of the unrest and devise remedies to counteract them. In its report, the Commission for Industrial Unrest in Bengal states that in nine months, from July 1920 to March 1921, no less than 137 strikes took place in the province of Bengal alone. The following figures quoted from the report of the Commission show that the strikes were very widespread and affected all branches of industries: 'As regards the economic loss by these strikes, it is calculated that 244,180 employees were involved and that the aggregate duration in working days was 2,631,488'.

Five strikes or more occurred in the following industries:

	No. of Strikes
Engineering and metal works	33
Jute mills	27
Transport and in the port of Calcutta	19
Public utility services	12
Coal mines	7
Cotton mills	6
Railways	5
Printing presses	5

This Commission, composed of official employers, legislators and labour leaders, made an exhaustive study of the causes of industrial unrest. In course of this study, the preoccupation that the labour troubles were due to political agitation was greatly dissipated.

> Industrial unrest is only a phase of the general unrest which has prevailed since the close of the war in every country in the world. The causes of the unrest are multifarious, political, social and economic. The economic causes are the most obvious and perhaps the most important. The increase in the cost of foodstuff, cloth and other necessities of life has been followed by a rise in the wages of all classes of labour, but the rise in wages has not at all times and in all industries, kept pace with the increase in prices. During the intervals, genuine hardship must have been caused to the labouring classes, giving rise to apprehension as to the future and a general feeling of unrest . . . At all events, labour is developing a new consciousness of its solidarity and value.

Out of the 134 strikes recorded in the report of the Commission, 110 were due to demands for higher wages or demands for wage increase together with other concessions, 13 were the continuation of the previous strikes after the original demands had been partially or completely satisfied. The strikes were renewed due to additional claims for overtime wages, strike pay, reinstitution of dismissed strikers or other reasons connected directly with the immediate interest of the workers. One remarkable feature was that only one strike was declared for better facilities for prayers on the part of the Muhamedan employees. This analysis of the strikes demonstrates the fundamental character of the unrest that has contaminated the entire working population of India.

In recommending the introduction of Joint Works Committees (on the style of Whitley Councils) the Commission makes the following interesting and significant remarks. 'It is a regrettable fact that, in spite of all that has been done during the last quarter of a century to improve the material condition of the work-people in the jute mills and other large industrial concerns on the banks of the Hoogly, the relations between the employers and employed are much less intimate and cordial than they were twenty years ago'.

It should be indicated that the owners of the industries referred to in the report are both foreign and native. The gravity of the industrial unrest can be gauged by the fact that the government found it necessary to appoint such a commission of enquiry and accept its recommendations. This shows that the employing class has been forced to recognize the proletariat as a factor to be contended with; and this position in the class struggle has been reached only after four years' fight. The class-cleavage in India is very wide and the objective force of the proletariat tremendous!

It is not only in the province of Bengal that the industrial unrest has attracted the attention of the government. All the provincial as well as the central governments are gravely concerned with this problem. Why? Because the growing consciousness of its class interest makes the working-class a powerful revolutionary factor, which will take part in the struggle for national freedom, not swayed by the wordy sentimentality of petty-bourgeois libertarians, but in the pursuit of its ultimate economic and social liberation. To deflect the most advanced section of the working-class from the national struggle by advocating the protection of its immediate material interests, appears to be within the present scheme of the government. The experienced British bourgeoisie, which stands behind the Indian government, does not fail to make a clear survey of the social forces underlying the revolutionary movement, and will avail itself of the inevitable results of the class-contradictions and antagonism in the national movement, if the awakening working-class is not led on to the revolutionary path according to its class interest. This is a task which appears to be beyond the wisdom and sagacity of the nationalist leaders and naturally calls for a political party of the working-class.

The first stage of the proletarian struggle, which was marked by a mad wave of spontaneous strikes, followed invariably by riots and disturbances, seems to have terminated by the end of the last year. Since then, the proletarian movement has apparently entered the period of organization and preparation for continuing the struggle with renewed vigour in the near future. Since the beginning of the present year the strike fever seems to have been on the decline. But now though the strikes are less frequent, they are better organized and are marked with the tendency of improving the immediate material conditions of the workers. In 1918 and 1919 the first years of proletarian struggle under nationalist leadership, the strikes cost the workers heavily, but very little was achieved by way of improving their material conditions. The nationalists were more interested in turning out a popular demonstration than to develop the revolutionary consciousness of the masses by participating in their struggle of everyday life; of course this defect of tactics of the nationalists is due to their affiliation which puts a class-stamp upon their activities. The proletarian class must develop its own leadership and political career. Short-sighted nationalist tactics have temporarily driven the organized section of the proletariat into the control of those non-revolutionary elements who, however, are helping to solidify the workers' ranks. The influence of this non-revolutionary element has succeeded in curbing the strike movement, and is trying to divert the proletarian energy into the channels of negotiation and conciliation with the employer. But this will simply embitter the antagonism, because the worker will come closer to the exploiter and will have more chances of seeing clearly the class-line that separates them.

Notwithstanding the temporary slackening of the revolutionary fervour of the worker-class movement, the situation in general has not changed very much. A note issued by the Labour Office states that in the province of Bombay, six strikes were declared in the month of April 1921, involving 103,850 persons and the loss of 184,450 working days. In May there [were] 11 strikes and lockouts affecting 120,290 men and causing the loss of 227,115 working days; in June the number of strikes was 10 with 16,117 men taking part and the loss of working days was 79,804. The next month showed a further decrease.

The demands put forth by the strikers of late are better thought out than before, when the proletariat was led more by indignation, restiveness and agitation. Now the demands are calculated to further the interest of the class, immediately as well as ultimately. The fight for the recognition of the unions is still going on. In many districts, the working-day has been reduced to 10 hours. Demand for participation in the profits is not infrequent. In many industrial centres, especially in Bombay, the latest demand is for universal free primary education for the children of the workers. A movement has been started for the institution of a minimum wage-board and 8 hour day. In July, a resolution to that effect was moved in the Legislative Council, but met a united opposition from the British as well as native industrial interests and was lost. The Factory Act of 1911 has been amended in spite of the opposition from the Mill Owners' Association with slight concessions to the workers, including an 11 hour day for men, a 10 hour day for women and a 6 hour day for children. Almost in every province with a large industrial proletariat some sort of conciliation board has been appointed to settle the disputes between capital and labour. These are but signs which indicate which way the wind is blowing. The city proletariat has become a social, economic and political factor in the national life.

It is the development of large-scale industry which is going to determine the future of India. The revolution has already begun and is marching with gigantic strides, disrupting the undermined structure of the village and building huge cities, whither the hapless wage-slaves are being driven by the force of circumstances. The vast masses of wage-slaves, which long since came into existence in the organism of Indian society reduced to capitalist exploitation, are in a process of concentration. The scattered forces are being mobilized into solid ranks. The consequence of this social readjustment cannot remain unfelt. In fact it is already manifesting itself very powerfully. It is the mass-awakening that has at last given real potentiality to the movement for national liberation; and it is the organized, class-conscious proletariat aided by the pauperized peasantry, which will lead the national struggle to a successful end. An unconscious ignorant mob, excited by frothy sentiments, is no match for the mighty British imperialism. In spite of its rapid growth, the Indian bourgeoisie is still very weak and is bound to be unsteady in its purpose; but before the worker there is nothing but struggle. It is he, having nothing to lose but his chains, on whom ultimately depends the national freedom; but national freedom does not mean anything to him unless it brings in its train his economic and social emancipation. The national liberation of India is but a prelude to a greater thing—the social emancipation of the working class. National struggle and class-struggle are going on side by side; the noisiness of the former cannot conceal the existence of the latter.

CHAPTER SIX

Political Movement

1. *Historical Background*

Before proceeding to deal with the national movement of modern India, it is necessary to review briefly the social and political events in the pre-British period. This study will help us to understand better the later developments, since these are but the inevitable consequences of the past. What is happening today has not been produced by the events exclusively of yesterday. Human history is connected with the dark ages of barbarism by the unbroken chain of evolution.

The English are not the first conquerors of India, which has been practically under foreign domination since the thirteenth century. Before the English became the political masters of the country, it had been ruled by Mohammedan conquerors. Of course, the character of the mediaeval empire of the Mussalmans differed greatly from the modern capitalist imperialism. But the fact remains that the domination of a conquering race interfered with the free social development of the native people, precluding thereby the evolution of a national state.

The Mussalmans began to invade India when the latter was in the first stage of feudalism. It was only among the Rajputs of the north that the feudal monarchy was fully developed, while the rest of the country still remained divided into a number of kingdoms, partly theocratic, partly patriarchal. Under such circumstances, national consciousness, embracing the entire population that inhabited the continent of India, was naturally an impossibility. The attempts made from time to time by one or another of these kingdoms to extend its boundaries at the cost of its neighbours, were not by any means actuated by the ideal of building up a great unified nation: dynastic ambition, pure and simple, was the motive behind such attempts. Nor could the heroic opposition put up by the Rajputs against the Moslem invaders be called national resistance, because the Rajput clans fought bravely to defend the feudal right of their chiefs, whose castles, women folk and patron-deity figured supreme among the holy objects to be defended at all costs. The Rajput chiefs led their legions to battle in order to defend the sanctity of 'Rajasthan' (the abode of the kings) against the aggression of the barbarian invaders. No talk of defending India or the Indian nation was heard, unless interpolated subsequently by the zeal of patriotic writers unmindful of the process of social evolution.

Under the rule of the Mussalman emperors, the greater portion of the country was brought under one central state, but not as a nation, because the court of Delhi was not the centre of a national state. The feudal imperialism of the emperors of Delhi was not based on the support of the loyal native nobility. It did not stand at the head of subordinate feudal nobles resting on serfdom as a social institution. The country was ruled, not by native feudal chiefs grown out of the people, but by nobles sent from the court of the foreign emperors. Feudal in origin, these nobles, nevertheless, could not count on the spontaneous support of the people they ruled over, because they had not grown out of the indigenous patriarchal society; power was not maintained by existing social forces within the country but by a mercenary army. The strength of Indian society lay in the decentralized village communities, which were far from being disintegrated by the advent of higher political institutions from outside. Therefore, the Indian people were not unified under a centralized state power, the first requisite for the growth of a national political consciousness. The feudal hordes and mercenary armies of the invading Moslems were able to sweep the country because a united resistance could not be put up. The social development of the native population precluded it. Only Rajputana, where feudalism had attained a high degree of development, could never be completely subdued by the Mussalman emperors, because in Rajputana, the strongly centralized feudal state was the outcome of a normal social growth, while feudalism was artificially foisted upon the country.

The result of the Mohammedan conquest was that the state-feudalism introduced by it, disturbed the free evolution of native feudal society. The theocratic and patriarchal Hindu kingdoms, which would otherwise have developed into feudal monarchies, were overthrown, to be replaced by imperial provinces ruled by the court nobles with the help of mercenary armies. Feudalism, which was in the process of evolution in the native social organism, was deprived of the possibility of political expression. The political state, imperial as well as provincial, was the apparatus of a dominant social class extraneous to the country. Its expression was mainly directed against the native feudal chiefs, an increase of whose power constituted a menace to the safety,—the very existence, of the Mussalman authority. Thus the establishment of a more advanced form of political institution, instead of contributing towards, checked the social progress of the people. The forces that would have led the people eventually through the different stages of political and social evolution to a united national state or a number of states, were disturbed. But however suppressed, the growth of native feudalism could not altogether be thwarted. It kept on accumulating vigour, which was expressed in the form of innumerable revolts against the imperial authority. This rebellion of oppressed feudal chiefs against the supremacy of foreign state feudalism should not be mistaken for a national awakening.

Political nationhood is a comparatively recent phenomenon in the annals of human history. It is the result of a certain stage of economic development, affecting communities inhabiting a given geographical region. Diverse groups of peoples living in the same surroundings, are gradually welded into a national entity under the pressure of economic forces. So long as these forces are not sufficiently developed, the sense of nationhood remains unknown to a people. India is no exception to this law. The extensive peninsula called India, is a mere geographical expression; it is very distinctly marked out from the mainland of Asia by physical barriers. But to hold that this geographical accident has been in itself sufficient to create a sense of national unity among the diverse communities inhabiting India, would be to misread the history of human evolution. To weld the numerous races and tribes, divided by language and grades of culture, into one national unity was conditional upon the development of a material force which could make such fusion possible. As long as the productive forces remain so backward that the different groups of the people can live in self-contained isolated communities, the simple accident of their happening to be situated within the limits of a certain geographical area does not suffice to make a nation out of them. It is only economic development that induces these isolated communities to come into relation with each other to satisfy their mutual needs. These relations may be warlike or peaceful, according to the circumstances. In the period of barbarism, clans and tribes make war upon each other in quest of fertile ground; gradually, the stronger one subdues and absorbs the weaker and grows into a theocratic feudal monarchy. Under the latter, the people are not united by national consciousness, but by common allegiance to the high priest or king or to both, as the case may be. The economic forces which eventually change this allegiance into rebellion are the source of political nationhood. Development of the mode of production brings into existence a new social class, the bourgeoisie, which struggles to control the production, distribution and exchange of commodities. In course of time, the political state power vested in the theocratic and feudal monarchy becomes a burden on social production, and the element controlling the latter originates the theory of nationhood, which is, that the sovereign power is not vested in an individual but in the entire community united into a nation. Under the influence of this growing social class, the bourgeoisie, which controls the productive life of the community, the national state, distinct from its feudal predecessors, is evolved. Economic relationships among the people united under such a state break down all racial, linguistic and cultural barriers; sectional isolation, prevailing hitherto, gives place to national cohesion.

Such economic development was not to be found in the resplendent Hindu kingdoms which flourished at the time of the Moslem invasions, not to mention those of earlier epochs. The Mussalman conquerors naturally would not help the growth of the idea that their political power was the expression of the sovereign will of the people, subjugated by them. Since neither the Hindu kingdoms nor the Moslem empire were based upon the economic supremacy of the middle-class, those states could not produce a sense of national solidarity among the people superficially united under them. They could not unify the Indian peoples into a single national existence because the economic forces, which alone are capable of bringing about such a union, had not yet attained the adequate stage of development.

This absence of national consciousness in the early and medieval stages of Indian development has been a great bone of contention between the two camps of historians, namely, the imperialist and nationalist. The former teaches that it was a peculiar defect of the Indian people that they never could unite upon a national basis; that this lack of national unity made the Indian people fall an easy prey to all foreign invaders; and that the unifying force of the British rule was indispensable for saving the Indian people from the political chaos and social anarchy in which they had been submerged for centuries. On the other hand, the patriotism of the nationalist historian revolts against this stamp of innate inferiority attached to his race, and he rushes to the other extreme in order to refute the imperialist interpretation of history, as if with a vengeance. He is untiring in pointing out how religious and cultural traditions knitted the peoples inhabiting the continent of India, into what he calls, a 'homogeneous national unit'. Scientifically judged, both of them,—the imperialist as well as the nationalist,—are bad readers of history. Their subjective attitude prevents them from looking at the history of human progress as it is. The imperialist distorts history to serve the purposes of insidious propaganda; while the nationalism of a subject people is naturally on the defensive. In his zeal to prove that the people of India are not inferior to other races, the nationalist historian goes so far as to assert that even among the peoples of primitive India, three or four thousand years ago, there existed a national consciousness. He forgets that, granted the existence of a certain religious and cultural solidarity, the presence of political nationhood is not necessarily established; it is with political nationhood that modern India is concerned, because political subjugation prevents the economic and social progress of a people. Political nationhood, and the struggle to attain a politically free national existence, in its turn, is conditional upon a certain grade of economic development in a particular people.

At the time of the British conquest, that is towards the middle of the eighteenth century, the economic and political evolution of India was such that her people could be called rather a number of nationalities inhabiting a continent, than a composite national unit. It is quite possible to imagine that but for the intervention of capitalist imperialism, which while obstructing the economic growth of her people, forced on them political unity, India would be today in a socio-political stage corresponding to that of modern Europe,—a continent composed of a number of free nationalities in different grades of economic and social development, but not one united nation. The march of historical events there, up till the eighteenth century did not appear to tend towards welding the diverse and often antagonistic communities into a unified national entity.

Nearly six hundred years of Mussalman rule left the various Indian communities still in a more or less isolated position. The revolts against the central authority of the court of Delhi were local, being led by feudal kings, and had grown powerful in spite of the imperial suppression. They never took the form of struggle for national liberation. Different parts of the country tried, and at last succeeded in breaking away from the empire, in different times and under the lead of different chiefs, most of whom were interested in their own particular locality. The trading and intellectual middle-class, whose mission it is to lay the foundation of a modern national edifice, had not yet become a political factor. It was only towards the end of the Moghul Empire (at the beginning of the eighteenth century) that a middle-class was found to raise its head. Up till then, under the Mussalmans as well as the Hindus, the state had been controlled either by the theocratic intelligentsia of the Brahmans, or the military caste of the Kshatriyas, or the Mussalman feudal nobility having no organic relation with the native society. Under such conditions, the idea of a national state embracing the entire country was inconceivable.

In the earlier decades of the eighteenth century, the Mussalman feudal imperialism broke down, after having ruled over the country approximately for five hundred years. By that time the middle-class had become an important factor in social economics, but nevertheless, it was still hedged in by feudal fetters on one side and by the caste guilds of the village communities on the other. Although the village still retained its position as the productive unit, the exchange and distribution of commodities had given rise to large towns which had become centres of prosperous trade carried on by an opulent middle-class. Production itself could no longer be kept rigidly confined within the limits of the village community. It had greatly lost its former individualistic character. In the large towns were accumulated numerous classes of handicraftsmen producing more for exchange than for use. This transformation in the economic life of the country had not only created a prosperous middle-class engaged in trade, but enabled the rich traders to make their influence felt in the political field, in spite of the fact that the ruling feudal aristocracy, Hindu as well as Mussalman, looked down upon them. The various independent states that sprang into being upon the ruins of the Moghul Empire, found themselves largely controlled financially by the trading class, although their political structure still remained feudal. This rising middle-class foreshadowed the development of a higher form of political state based no longer upon feudal or dynastic authority, but upon the theory of nationhood,—a political theory still to be evolved.

The collapse of the feudal empire of the Moghuls, however, was not caused directly and exclusively by the rise of the middle-class. The Moslem state-feudalism maintained by military force, was subverted by the growth of native feudal monarchies which were more virile because of their closer contact with the people, whose serfdom constituted the social basis of their power. In the days of the decay of the Moghul Empire, its armies had become mere bands of marauders, without any vital connection with the people. The leaders of these armies were more adventurers looking for personal aggrandizement than defenders of an existing economic and political order. Instead of defending the integrity of the Empire, the nobility of the effete court utilized their control of the army for the realization of personal ambition, and a good many of them ended by establishing independent kingdoms headed by their respective dynasties. Its own internal disintegration, together with the rise of the Sikh, Rajput and Marhatta powers, caused the disruption of the Mussalman Empire. These three might all be looked upon as the re-vindication of native feudalism, whose normal growth had been disturbed and delayed by the introduction of Moslem state-feudalism.

When the Moghul Empire declined in the first part of the eighteenth century, there existed in the country a trading and intellectual middle-class which objectively was the most progressive social factor. It was destined to capture the political statepower eventually, because its economic growth could not fully be realized under feudal political institutions. But it was not yet strong enough to enter the contest openly for political supremacy. A state which is to be the political expression of the middle-class must be based upon the theory of the sovereignty of the people, because the middle-class cannot overthrow and supplant the feudal power without the support of the people. So, on the eve of beginning its struggle for political power, the middle-class formulates the theory of nationhood based upon the so-called 'natural right' of the people, to rule itself through delegated or elected representatives. But the Indian bourgeoisie in that period had not yet evolved a political ideology of its own. Its socio-economic position was such, that it was forced to remain the unseen power behind the throne on which the feudal monarchs still sat. There was, therefore, no force to contest the absolute authority of the latter. Its political immaturity prevented the middle-class from initiating and heading a movement having for its object the establishment of a national state, based upon democratic principles. Consequently, the dissolution of the Moslem power was followed by a long period of chaos and anarchy from the midst of which arose the Marhatta feudal monarchy.

The rise of the Marhatta power marks the first stages of political nationalism in the history of India. The Marhatta kings, under the influence of their ministers, who belonged to the Brahman intelligentsia, conceived the idea of establishing a Hindu federal empire on the ruins of the Moslem supremacy. This project of founding a national state was realized to a certain extent, not alone by the feudal chiefs, but under the rule of the Brahman ministers, who captured the political power of the state, peacefully replacing the royal dynasty. The federal empire of the Marhattas was consolidated, not under the leadership of the feudal dynasty which had originally started the revolt against the Moghul power, and which eventually contributed to its dissolution more than any other factor, but under the astute statesmanship of the Brahman intelligentsia in control of the state power, including the victorious military forces. Its political philosophy however, could hardly be separated from feudal traditions. Consequently, before the primitive Hindu nationalism of the Marhattas could crystallize itself as such, it degenerated into medieval imperialism of the worst sort. The fact that the Marhatta Confederacy itself was, ere long, dismembered into several principalities fighting against each other, proves that the ideal of a national state had not been realized. It was not so much the awakening national consciousness as the military prowess of the Marhattas, which defeated the mercenary armies of the decrepit Moghul Empire.

The Marhatta Confederacy failed to consolidate the people into a national unit, because the economic foundation of the society on which such a political superstructure could be sustained for any length of time, had been shaken. The economic life of the country was no longer nourished exclusively by serf labour; the rise of the middle-class, given to prosperous trade and banking, signified radical change in the productive forces. A state power that could, in that period, assume a national character, should have been built on the economic factor; should have been the political apparatus in the hand of the trading-class; should have brought peace and order out of chaos and anarchy in order to help the development of the new productive forces. Instead of using it for pillage and plunder, it should have wielded its military power as a police force. These are the characteristics of the bourgeois state; but the feudal character of Marhatta power prevented it from adapting its nationalism to the contemporary economic factors and social tendencies. Thus, despite its patriotism, based on religious antagonism, the Marhatta power could not help but degenerate into rabid imperialism, which was instrumental in ruining the country, instead of contributing to the growth of nationhood. The Marhatta revolt against the Moslem authority failed to realize its original programme., viz. the building up of a unified Hindu nation,—because it was the political and military expression of native feudalism, which had been suppressed by Mussalman Imperialism. But feudalism, as a socio-economic institution had objectively reached the stage of decline; it could no longer be the state power. Therefore, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, the Indian people refused to respond to the reactionary cult of the religio-political nationalism preached by a feudal state. Instead of being a unifying force, the Marhatta power degenerated to such an extent that its very name became a terror all over the country.

By the time the representatives of the English trading bourgeoisie began the first stages of struggle for political power in India, the Marhattas had reached the pinnacle of ascendancy, and were already on the decline. The political chaos and social anarchy reigning since the beginning of the eighteenth century, had reached their climax. Civil war was the order of the day, and the economic life of the country was seriously injured. Feudalism, Hindu as well as Moslem, had landed in political bankruptcy, having failed to maintain an established government ruling over any considerable part of the country. It could not bring order out of chaos. A more advanced social factor had to appear on the field in order to build a political institution appropriate to the situation; a social factor that could count upon the tacit support of the people at large by advancing social progress; a social factor that could put an end to the ruinous civil wars and inaugurate an era of economic reconstruction and political peace. A progressive middle-class, controlling production and distribution by means of trades capital, was this power-to-be. This element did exist in the country at the moment, but its development had been rather stunted and immature owing to the troubled conditions obtaining just about the time that it assumed the proper social significance. The English bourgeoisie, which happened to appear on the scene in the person of the East India Company, as it were, took the hint from history and began to establish its domination over the country with the 'aid of the Indian people themselves'.

Marhatta nationalism, sanctified by religious traditions, failed to enlist the support even of the various Hindu communities; but a handful of foreign traders could become the paramount power of the country without meeting any serious popular resistance. The British East India Company happened to embody the social force which alone was able to secure what the Indian people badly needed. This was a form of government which could bring peace and order to the country. The people were craving for the cessation of the civil war ravaging the land. Every class, except the doomed feudal rulers and their henchmen given to plunder and pillage, cried for settled conditions, and would welcome any government which could assure it. Peasants, artisans, traders, intellectuals, all were sick of the civil war which had affected more or less seriously their respective material interests. The peasant could not peacefully till his land unless the danger of marauding hordes trampling over it was removed; artisans and traders suffered alike because the general insecurity of life and transportation had ruined commerce, and the heavy tolls levied by irresponsible rulers were killing the economic life of the country; the intellectuals needed an established order of society in order to thrive. The foreign traders also required settled conditions. Thus it happened that the material interests of the would-be conqueror coincided with those of the about-to-be conquered. The representatives of the British bourgeoisie entered the field of political aggression with the standard of "peace and order", and soon became the paramount power of India with the aid and connivance of the Indian people themselves.

At the time of the British conquest, the Indian people were nothing but a mass of humanity, in the period of transition from a disintegrated feudalism to a higher stage of social evolution. The forces that could weld it into a national entity in the political sense, had not yet fully developed. The imperialist theory that the people of India were incapable of ruling themselves, and therefore, needed the protection and guidance of a more civilized nation, is preposterous. But what is historically true is that in the first part of the eighteenth century, India stood in need of a new social force which could lead her out of the chaos and anarchy resulting from the breakdown of the feudal states. In the bourgeoisie was to be found the saviour. The failure of the Marhatta confederacy had demonstrated that a national state could not be built upon the basis of feudalism. A higher form of political institution was necessary, and this new institution should have been the bourgeois state resting on the theory of the sovereignty of the people—political nationhood. But the native middle-class failed to rise to the situation. It had not attained the necessary political maturity.

If a handful of English merchants could subdue such a vast population and one not in a barbarous stage of development, it was not, as the nationalists hold, simply because of the "devilish perfidy" of the invaders. There were deeper social reasons behind the tragic episode called the British conquest of India. Such an outstanding historical event cannot be explained light-heartedly away with the flourish of such eloquent phrases as "unscrupulous intrigues of perfidious Albion", marshalled by the conquered; nor as "an agreeable accident of history" piously pronounced by the apologists of British Imperialism. To an unprejudiced student, the British conquest of India does indeed appear more as an accident than as the result of consummate intrigues. But to call it an accident pure and simple, divorced from the gigantic scheme of human progress, might flatter imperial egotism, but it betrays sheer ignorance of social history. The British conquest of India is one of those accidents which are not very rare in human history,—accidents precipitated by the coincidence of events and forces developing with method, and in conformity with definite material laws. The English traders who came to the shores of India without any political pretensions, could eventually establish a great and mighty empire, because they happened to embody the social force which, in accordance with the imperious material laws determining all human progress, was next to assert itself over the political life of the country.

The British East India Company succeeded in establishing its political domination over India with the help of, and subsequently at the cost of, the native trading class which, together with the intelligentsia, constituted the progressive and objectively most revolutionary factor of Indian society in the middle and latter parts of the eighteenth century. In order to consolidate its power, the Company's government had to enlist the support of a sufficiently strong social class, since otherwise the political domination of a handful of foreigners could not be expected to endure. The natural ally was of course, the native trading class, since it belonged to the same social category as the foreign invader. In fact, the native trader did enter into an alliance with the British Company even before the latter had entered the political struggle, and render it valuable services. It was a social struggle, in which national differentiation was overwhelmed by imperious economic necessities.

The glorious role of freeing the people from feudal fetters did not fall to the lot of the Indian middle-class libertarians. It was misappropriated by the British bourgeoisie, represented by the East India

Company. The facility with which the English aggressor could defeat one after another of the feudal monarchies with armies recruited from among the native peasantry, demonstrated that the social foundation of Indian feudalism was decayed. The forces for overthrowing feudalism had grown in the social organism. The tragedy was that it was not the native bourgeoisie which marshalled and led these revolutionary forces on the path of social progress, but a foreign agency which appeared on the scene at the critical moment and exploited the revolutionary forces for its own benefit, thereby throttling Indian social progress and causing national stagnation.

The threadbare feudal political structures collapsed like so many houses of cards before the attack of the foreign commercial bourgeoisie, because the latter objectively corresponded to and was actually backed by the native social forces which would have performed the same exploit, perhaps somewhat later, had not the English intruded. Thus, by overthrowing feudalism from the political power, the English invaders did perform a revolutionary act; but it was not long before they transformed themselves into a counter-revolutionary force by obstructing the progress of those very native elements which had helped them come to power. The British bourgeoisie was interested in the establishment of a colonial state, which did not need the same economic foundation as a bourgeois national state. The exploitation of an imperial bourgeoisie governing a colonial country does not follow the same line as that of a national bourgeoisie. The progress and prosperity of the latter require the fomenting of national consciousness and then of jingoism in the people, while the former obstructs the growth of national consciousness. To let the social forces develop which brought the English traders to political power would have meant the inevitable rise of the native bourgeoisie, a factor positively dangerous to the safety of the foreign domination. Therefore, the policy of the British Indian government was to crush the native trading class. Its power of resistance broken, feudalism was perpetuated in the persons of the newly-created landed aristocracy and impotent native states, both of which factors became the mainstay British rule. The reinstatement of the feudal show, however, put the peasantry back into practical serfdom. All economic progress was made impossible by the coercion of the state. Thus, the British conquest of India, which could be called a *coup d'etat* made by a foreign bourgeoisie with the help of a series of rather premature revolutionary forces, brought peace and order. But the peace soon proved to be the inactivity of the exhausted. The British power secured its own position in India by economic suppression and the social stagnation and political slumber that unavoidably followed it. First utilized and misled, then betrayed and ultimately wantonly destroyed by its more developed foreign prototype with a state behind it; the Indian middle-class remained practically non-existent politically for a considerable time after its forefathers had helped the English lay the foundation of their Indian Empire. The economic suppression of the propertied and intellectual middle-class, made a liberal bourgeois political movement impossible. The absence of a bourgeoisie precluded the evolution of those forces that make for the national consciousness of a people. Such was the background out of which has evolved the modern political movements of India. The political nationalism of modern India expresses the political ideology and aspiration of a youthful bourgeoisie, which has risen in spite of innumerable obstacles and which has never had the opportunity of utilizing the state apparatus for disseminating and inculcating in the people the idea of nationhood. But at the same time, it enjoys the advantage of shielding its exploitations under the cry against foreign oppression. The nationalism of contemporary India lacks the tradition of a national unity, but it rests on the reaction against a common oppression. This negative basis, however, renders the national liberation movement led by the bourgeoisie, inherently weak. Therefore, the political liberation of the oppressed people of India depends less on the nationalism of the bourgeoisie than on the struggle of the exploited masses for economic and social emancipation. It will be seen presently how the political movement in the India of today is being strengthened by the class-struggle that is overshadowing the nationalist sentiment, which has never gone beyond the limits of a certain section of the middle class.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Political Movement (Contd.)

2. *Modern*

The first hundred years of British rule was a period of social and political stagnation resulting from the ruthless destruction of the progressive tendencies in production. The political power passed on to the control of a foreign bourgeoisie which, instead of helping the development of higher productive methods, pushed the society back to the stage of agrarian economy. This told heavily on the native middle-class, which had already reached an advanced stage of trades capitalism and was standing on the eve of large-scale industrial production. Economic suppression of the native middle-class precluded the possibility of a political movement of a modern democratic character. There was no other element in the native population which could resist or be hostile to the foreign ruler. The programme of "peace and order", which was gradually realized, secured the foreign conqueror active support from certain sections and the passive connivance of the masses of the population. The much longed for peace put the society, as it were, to a political sleep.

Peace established by a bourgeois state is usually followed by social progress and economic prosperity of a certain section of the people. But the peace, which the British conquest gave to India, turned to be the listlessness of the paralytic; the order was not that of a new society evolved out of the decayed old; it was the artificial maintenance of the status quo which had been disturbed by the rise of new social forces. The fact of its being a colonial government turned the bourgeois state established by the English in India, into a reactionary force, because its safety and continued existence had to be secured by the destruction of all progressive forces in the native society. The practical elimination of the bourgeoisie from the political field made the growth of the spirit of nationhood an impossibility. The government was a bourgeois political institution, and as such was indeed an improvement on the older forms the country had evolved, but it was not a national state. Therefore its policy was not to foment national consciousness by means of public instruction, a capitalist press, ceremonies etc., but to keep the people in their primitive ignorance. In order to hold the society in a backward state, skeletons of the undermined feudal structure were maintained and pampered. These impotent feudal rulers, together with the newly-created landed aristocracy to which the rich trading class was cleverly diverted, constituted the social basis of the British rule for more than a hundred years. So in spite of being in itself a bourgeois state, the British Indian government allied itself with the conservative and reactionary elements of the native population. This unholy alliance enabled it to betray and choke its former partner, the native trading and intellectual middle-class. The elimination of the latter caused a social reaction inevitably followed by political apathy.

Such a social atmosphere, which prevailed till after the middle of the nineteenth century, was not conducive to the evolution of any political movement of a national character. The revolt of 1857 was the first serious attempt to overthrow the British domination; but by no means could it be looked upon as a national movement. It was nothing more than the last spasm of the dying feudalism. In so far as it aimed at the overthrow of foreign domination, which had obstructed the social growth of the people, the revolt of 1857 was revolutionary; but socially it was a reactionary movement, because it wanted to replace British rule by revived feudal imperialism, either of the Mughals or the Marhattas. This objectively reactionary character was the reason of its failure. It could not have been suppressed had it been a progressive national movement, led by the native bourgeoisie with advanced social ideas and political programme. But such a movement was impossible in that epoch. The necessary social elements were absent. The following opinion of the imperialist historian Seeley is on the whole, a correct interpretation of the situation:

> We could subdue the mutiny of 1857, formidable as it was, because it spread through only a part of the army, because the people did not actively sympathize with it, because it was possible to find Indian races who would fight on our side. The moment a mutiny is threatened, which shall be no more mutiny, but the expression of a universal feeling of nationality, at that moment all hope is at an end of preserving our empire. For we are not really conquerors of India, and we cannot rule her as conquerors.

The revolt of 1857 was predominantly a military mutiny brought about by the intrigues of the deposed and discontented feudal chiefs. The people at large had very little to do with it; the majority of them either remained passive or helped the British government. The only powerful Indian community with some sense of national solidarity, rendered valuable services to the British. It was the Sikhs, who had maintained an independent national state until but a few years before the mutiny, whose military aid contributed largely to the suppression of the rebellion. The English system of education introduced in the thirties, had brought into existence a small class of modern intellectuals who could be looked upon as the forerunners of the national movement of the subsequent epoch. The mutiny found all these intellectuals with modern and progressive thought, on the side of the British government. Only in some of the minor native states the people were somewhat drawn into the revolt because feudalism was still a living force in those parts. The failure of the mutiny proved that the intrigues of a backward social force, doomed to death by history, could not realize a national unity in opposition to a foreign domination which, nevertheless, objectively embodied an advanced political thought. The country was still undergoing a reaction against the long period of chaos and anarchy through which it had passed, and would thus stand by that political power which could ensure peace and order, however dearly the latter might cost.

Orthodox nationalists of a later period looked upon and interpreted the rebellion of 1857 as a great struggle for independence. This tendency betrays the grave danger of reaction which is contained in the nationalism built on a religious basis. No Indian nationalist who stands for the social progress of his people and who struggles for political independence as a step towards that goal, would be treading the right path by clinging to the sentiments that lay behind the revolt of 1857, which was not merely a military effort to overthrow the foreign domination. It was provoked by a fierce spirit of social reaction, being a revolt not against the British government in particular, but against the advanced social and political ideas it embodied,—the ideas which were hailed by the intellectual middle-class of India, because the latter was materially prepared for them, and would itself have evolved them, had they not been brought into the country through the agency of a foreign conqueror. In fact, the foreign "barbarians", against whom the ideological leaders of the mutiny sought to incite the Indian masses, were detrimental to the untrammelled evolution of progressive social and political thought in the native middle-class, inasmuch as they obstructed the latter's economic development.

A hundred years had passed since the British began to implant their political domination in the country. The earlier years of their rule were marked by wanton economic suppression, which was executed partly by plunder and spoilation, partly by destroying the native handicraft industry in competition with the machine production of England. The former method was used against the feudal rulers, while the latter served to reduce the trading class to social inaction and political impotency. The wisdom of the policy of basing British domination on the landed aristocracy, inaugurated under the direction of a semi-feudal Parliament at home, came to be questioned by not a few Englishmen in the government of India. These representatives of the English liberal bourgeoisie held that it was dangerous to rely on a reactionary social element. They suggested that the middle-class was the natural ally and that its intellectual growth should be helped by the government. This new tendency was expressed in the desire to introduce Western education into India. The object was to allow the progressive forces of the native society an intellectual expression, which, however, being devoid of any economic might, would not be able to be politically dangerous, but at the same time would constitute a bulwark against possible reactionary upheavals. A purely political manoeuvre on the part of the British rulers, this policy was interpreted by the apostles of reaction as a clever design to undermine their hold on the people; nevertheless, obviously contrary to the expectation of its promoters, it marked the birth of modern India. Inadvertently, it let loose that dynamic social force which was destined to prove eventually mortal to the British, and in order to be able to fulfill its historic mission, had to prove itself an enemy of the native reactionary elements, which stood in the way of progress in the name of national culture and traditions. As a result of this policy of introducing Western education, a class of intellectuals with modern thoughts and progressive tendencies had come into existence already in the thirties of the nineteenth century. Still in its infancy, this progressive element showed signs of vigour in social and religious reformism, if not in the political field, which was naturally closed to it owing to the economic stagnation in which it was forcibly kept. But its very existence, which happened to be still under the fatally miscalculated patronage of the British government, was a challenge to the old order of things. The social significance of the revolt of 1857 was the reaction it embodied against this revolutionary force, which had not appeared as such till then, but which was the harbinger of a new India, to be dominated neither by a foreign imperialism however liberal, nor by the native conservatism however glorified.

'All the vested interests connected with the old order of things in the religious as well as in the political domain, felt the ground swaying under their feet, and the peril with which they were confronted came not only from their alien rulers but from their own countrymen, often of their own caste and race, who had fallen into the snares and pitfalls of an alien civilization'. These words of Valentine Chirol can be taken as a picture of the social background of the mutiny, if only the last phrase is substituted by 'who had awakened to the idea that the old social and political institutions were detrimental to the future progress of India'. The failure of the Mutiny proved conclusively that the people of India were not united by the old social institutions and religious traditions, that the future of India was to be secured not by the impossible revival of the old order of things, but by the birth of a new force arising upon the ruins of the old. The birth of this new [force] was obstructed, but could not be prevented by the foreign ruler.*

The safe continuation of the foreign domination, however, still needed the sinister services of the reactionary forces in order to keep the masses of the population away from the influence of the progressive intellectuals. The social and religious superstitions were very useful in keeping the people in ignorance and resigned to their position. Therefore, in the memorable Queen's Proclamation which followed the suppression of the Revolt, was emphasized the determination of the British Government 'to abstain from all interference with religious beliefs or worship'. This was obviously a concession to the forces of reaction, whose good graces should be enlisted as a counterpoise against the rising progressive intellectuals, who were always looked upon with suspicion on account of their objectively revolutionary character. The vanguard of the native society, they could not however be alienated, because their support was the most reliable foundation on which the foreign rule could rest itself. Therefore, in order to demonstrate that the British government was not inimical to the aspirations of the intellectuals, the following liberal and democratic clause was also incorporated in the same proclamation: 'British subjects of whatever race or creed will be freely and impartially admitted to the offices in the services of the Crown, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity duly to discharge'. But in the same breath it is added 'in framing and administering the law, due regard will be paid to the ancient rights, usages and customs of India' as if to reassure the conservative elements that their social rights and privileges would be protected by the government.

From such a background has arisen the forces which made for the political movements of modern India. The policy of the British government in the first half of the nineteenth century at the same time obstructed and contributed to the evolution of that social class, on which depended the formulation of the idea of nationhood of the Indian people. By protecting the factors which made for social reaction, even long after the feudal political power was broken, the government rendered the growth of national consciousness among the masses of people impossible; but on the other hand, in the person of the intellectuals educated in modern ideas, were allowed to be born the forerunners of Indian nationalism.

Ever since the earlier decades of the nineteenth century, by which time British domination was fairly consolidated, there had existed the tendency to enlist for the government the support of the native intelligentsia, which, without an economically strong middle-class behind itself, could not constitute a political danger. This tendency naturally gave birth to the controversy over the introduction of the Western system of education. The opposition against it was strong, first from the English administrators, then from the conservative Indians. The former held that the introduction of modern education would sooner or latter widen the political vision of the native middle-class. Putting forward this point of view, Sir John Malcolm sounded an alarm in the following words pronounced in 1813: "It will be something like suicide if we will increase the facilities for education in India". The class instinct and imperialist caution, which made him utter this warning, have since been very well justified. The Indians were against English education, because they saw in it a covert attack on their religious and social institutions. This apprehension was based on the fact that it was the Christian missionaries who first opened English schools.

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* The word force was not in the original text and hence has been put within brackets. S.N.R.

The new policy of drawing the native intelligentsia closer to the government triumphed when a Special Committee appointed by the Parliament after the Reform Bill of 1833, reported that "Indians were alive to the grievance of being excluded from a larger share in the executive government" and testified that "such exclusion is not warranted on the score of their own incapacity for business or the want of application or trust-worthiness". On the basis of this testimony it was laid down that "no native of the said Indian territories shall by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the Company", which was the government of India in those days.

It was indeed a bold step on the part of the British bourgeoisie to have brought Western education within the reach of the Indian intelligentsia. It broke the spell of reactionary nationalism, which subsequently took the violent expression of the Mutiny, but laid the foundation on which was built eventually the theory of the political nationhood of the Indian people. Macaulay, who is to be thanked more than anybody else for the introduction of Western education into India, appeared to have understood the gravity of the step he was advocating, and perhaps even the fatality involved in it. Because in course of the debate on the question in 1833 he put to the British Parliament these ominous questions: "Do you think we can give the Indians knowledge without awakening their ambition? Do you think we can awaken their ambition without giving some legitimate vent for it?" What induced the British imperialists to start on such a dangerous path in spite of having foreseen what lay ahead? It was indeed not the humanitarian mission of civilizing the backward peoples as the imperialist prophets preach. The object was to foment the growth of a native element which would consciously support the British government as the most beneficial political institution, an element so educated as to understand that any other form of government based on native traditions, would be a step backward in the path of social progress. The wisdom of this policy was demonstrated by the part played by the modern intelligentsia during the revolt of 1857. The immediate effect of the introduction of English education was the adherence of the most progressive native element to the rule of the foreign bourgeoisie. This adherence was complete, being moral and intellectual as well as political. With this achievement, British domination found itself planted on a more secure ground, that of the social class historically destined to be the political leader of the people. The young, progressive elements of Indian society of the early Victorian age proved to be a useful appendix to the foreign ruling-class. The economic suppression of the middle-class precluded the possibility of its being politically revolutionary, which it nevertheless was, as an objective social force. Therefore, its activities were confined to the fields of social and religious reforms, activities which invoked upon its members the wrath of the forces of reaction and conservatism.

The alacrity and enthusiasm with which English education was hailed by a section of the rich middle-class, shows that the latter was in a receptive mood. Modern political ideals and advanced social philosophies were studied earnestly by thousands of young men not only in the schools and colleges in India, but many of those who could afford went to the Universities in England, thus violating the old social prohibitions. Judged from the point of view of the native culture and traditions, the first generations of the modern-educated intelligentsia could be called de-nationalized, because they were more English than Indian. Their religion was that of Spencer and Comte, their philosophy that of Bentham and the Mills. But they were the first rebels, boldly raising a voice challenging the old order of things, and heralding the birth of a new India which could not come into existence without shattering the still cherished religious and social ideals and institutions of old. In the earlier days they were politically impotent, but it was not long before these so-called de-nationalized intellectuals proved to be the fathers of the modern political nationalism of India.

With the suppression of the Revolt of 1857, feudalism was altogether eliminated from the political domain, notwithstanding the fact that for convenience, imperialist domination still perpetuated its hollow skeleton clothed in comic pomp and grandeur. The economic backbone of the native bourgeoisie had long ago been broken. The evolution of higher means of production having been obstructed for the benefit of colonial capitalism, the overwhelming majority of the population lived in villages, steeped in ignorance and submerged in social stagnation. Politics, forms of government, national subjugation or freedom remained matters outside their concern and beyond their comprehension. The only section of the people showing any sign of life was the modern intellectuals educated in Western methods and thoughts. The numerical strength of this class was infinitesimal in comparison with the vast population economically suppressed, socially stagnant and politically inarticulate. Trained in the school of bourgeois liberalism and staunch believers in English constitutional traditions, these "de-nationalized" intellectuals were instrumental in bringing to India, for the first time in her long eventful history, political patriotism. The rise of a class educated in modern political thought marked the beginning of a movement which was to develop into a struggle for national liberation, to culminate eventually in the establishment of a centralized state embracing the various communities, united by common oppression, and represented by a native bourgeoisie, strong economically, and ambitious for political supremacy.

The economic development of the middle-class having been impeded first by political instability and civil wars before the English government was established, and then by the capture of state power by a foreign capitalist imperialism, the modern ideology of bourgeois democracy could not evolve out of the native society. But when modern political thoughts became accessible by means of foreign education, Indian intellectuals responded to them enthusiastically. Being a bourgeois state, the Government of India was at first accepted by them as the best political institution. However, it was not long before they discovered the discrepancy between the theory and practice of British political philosophy, in so far as the Indian administration was concerned. Having been taught by English authorities that representative government was the noblest of the political institutions and that the world was indebted to the Anglo-Saxon race for this blessing, the Indian intellectuals found in the British government of India a total negation of the principle of popular representation. This discovery created discontent in them, their Anglicism notwithstanding. Thus was initiated the first stage of the struggle for representative government. This struggle of the radical intelligentsia was not against an effete and antiquated political institution, but for the democratization of the existing government which, by virtue of its being controlled by the bourgeoisie, was the most advanced that the country had till then. The ideology of this struggle had to be therefore, borrowed from the English bourgeoisie itself. Disciples of

English schools of political philosophy and admirers of British constitutionalism, the pioneers of the Indian national movement could not question the legitimacy and authority of the government established and carried on in the name of that greatest constitutional democratic body, the British Parliament. Their contention was that the government of India should live up to the doctrine of popular representation, the cornerstone of all bourgeois political structures.

The agitation for giving the British government of India a representative character was obviously based on the theory of nationhood inherent in the people. A central state had been established uniting the peoples of India in one political entity, which awakened in the liberal intellectual the vision of an Indian nation desiring to be represented in the administration of its public affairs. This new nationalism was not founded on the old traditions nor on cultural unity of the Indian people. It was a political conception having for its object the establishment of a bourgeois national state. The idea of the political nationhood of the people led the intellectual democrats to think that they were their popular representatives, and as such had the right to be included in the government of the country. Their former docile admiration for the British government gradually changed into criticism, "loyal opposition". Such was the origin and evolution of the political movement in the 1870s and early 1880s.

The intellectuals trained in modern political thoughts laid down the theoretical foundation for the nationalism which was still to come, but the dynamic cause behind the movement was the economic revival of the native middle-class, after more than a hundred years of repression. The years following the revolt of 1857 were marked by a policy of reconciliation on the part of the British government. The modernized intellectuals and the progressive trading-class, which rendered valuable services in the critical days of the Mutiny, were patronized to some extent. The former, engaged in liberal professions and public administration, grew rich, while the latter was also becoming prosperous on account of the thriving internal trade, whose volume increased in proportion to the import of manufactured commodities and export of raw materials. Considerable wealth was accumulated in the hands of both these elements, and consequently the desire for economic expansion was felt. The number of English-educated young men was rapidly growing. The liberal professions were becoming overcrowded. The government could not employ very many of these young men in higher posts without running the risk of losing control of the public administration. The native capitalist class could not be allowed to enter the industrial field without violating the imperialist monopoly.

Economic disabilities created the necessity for political revolution.

The time came when the most powerful elements of the Indian population felt their ambitions restricted by the foreign government. Intellectuals found the doors to the higher administrative positions closed to them; and the industrial expansion of the capitalist middle-class also met resistance from the government. The political movement was initiated by the former, armed with the doctrines of representative government learnt from English authorities, and was subsequently reinforced by the latter. Although the dynamic force of the movement against foreign rule is to be primarily looked for in the revival of the native capitalist class, the formulation of the philosophy of Indian nationhood must be attributed to the liberal intellectuals, who are usually scorned by the orthodox nationalists as "denationalized patriots". Opposition to the British government could not be put up otherwise than in the name of the nation. A common school of education united the intellectuals on a common field of activities in order to realize the same aspirations. They began the struggle in the name of the people of India as a political unit which they claimed to represent, and whose national interest they pretended to defend. Thus, the forerunners of Indian nationalism, who were as much divorced from the national life and tradition, culturally and ideologically, as the English rulers themselves, assumed the role of popular representatives.

The fathers of Indian nationalism could be called rather constitutional democrats and reformers than nationalists. They believed more in English political ethics than in the social and cultural teachings of their forefathers. Their cult was not of nationalism, but of representative government. Unlike the progenitors of the European bourgeoisie, they were not evolving the doctrines of a new state based on new social relations. Socially they were revolutionaries, while politically they were but reformers, because the political revolution with the object of building a bourgeois state on the ruins of feudalism, had been accomplished in the form of the British conquest. Therefore, their political struggle consisted in pointing out that the British Indian government did not comply with all the teachings of the prophets of the English school of constitutional liberalism. They constituted an opposition, but a 'loyal' opposition, to the policy of maintaining a strict British monopoly on the administration of the country. Their class instinct made them conform with the established government, so long as it was controlled by the bourgeoisie, nationality making no difference. They were not against the fundamentals of the bourgeois philosophy of state. They were convinced that any other form of state would not be compatible with their progressive social ideals, which were antagonistic to native traditions of feudal autocracy, absolute monarchy, religious reaction and patriarchal conservatism.

They implicitly believed with their English preceptors, that the progress of the people, the civilization of the nation, would be realized under the protection of an enlightened government. But such a form of government could not be evolved from the contemporary Indian society, in which the educated, progressive and propertied middle-class still remained an almost negligible factor. Therefore they accepted the political institutions introduced by the British bourgeois imperialist as the best that the country had had till then. But according to the doctrines of bourgeois democracy, which were supposed to be the guiding principles of British rule, these institutions should be representative. An enlightened modern government should draw its authority from the people, in whose name it must rule. The government of India should be representative of the people; it must become a democratic institution by including the progressive intellectuals in its structure. Here in this demand, if it could be called a demand in those days, lay the germ of the idea of nationhood developed later on in accordance with the growth of the native middle-class.

Behind this demand for representative government, which looked like academic discussions indulged in by young intellectual visionaries, lurked the urges of economic interest which eventually supplied the motive-power of the national movement. So far, in return for the peace and order which it undoubtedly established, the British government in India had kept the natives excluded from the domain of political and military authority, in order to secure for the imperialist bourgeoisie a position of great privilege in the field of economic exploitation. Permitting the dissemination of modern education, which awakened the Indian intelligentsia to a new political vision, had not in any way changed the policy of the British government, formulated as far back as 1833 in these words of the then Governor-General: 'Our very existence depends upon the exclusion of the native from military and political power.'

Ruthless economic exploitation, aided by the policy of obstructing industrial development through native capitalist enterprise, had prevented the rise of a class which might contest this monopoly. In its earlier generations, the modern intelligentsia did not constitute a political factor; on the contrary, it served the purposes of the imperialist bourgeoisie by denouncing the native social and religious institutions as well as political backwardness. This attitude of the most enlightened and progressive element of her people was used by the imperialists to prove that India could not govern herself and needed the protection of a civilized nation. But the growth of a middle-class, notwithstanding all obstacles, changed the attitude of the intelligentsia, which retaining still its admiration for and faith in British constitutionalism, began to agitate for representative institutions.

The representation sought for was evidently in the interest of the middle-class. The claim was that the government of the country should not overlook the aspirations of the propertied and intellectual middle-class, in order to be recognized as the best political institution for the country. The spiritual vanguard of the modern bourgeoisie, that is, the Western educated intelligentsia, was the first to register its claim, joined subsequently by its capitalist colleague. The intellectuals wanted to be admitted to the higher administrative positions as representatives of the governed, and later on this programme of administrative reform was supplemented by the demand for fiscal autonomy, which voiced the aspiration of the nascent native capitalist class.

The expression of the aspiration of a social class with identical economic interests but still in its infancy was clothed in the language of the democratic scriptures of "National Will", "Sovereign Prerogative of the People" etc. The rise of the modern middle-class, capitalist as well as intellectual, marked the laying of the foundation of Indian nationalism in the political sense. In order to prove that, according to the principles of democracy, they were entitled to be parts of the government, the bourgeois intellectuals began to talk of the Indian people as a political unit whom they claimed to represent. Had not the forerunners of the Indian bourgeoisie been suffocated in the middle of the eighteenth century by historical accidents, they would have built, most probably, several modern nations out of the mass of humanity living on the continent of India. A hundred and fifty years later began the renaissance of the Indian bourgeoisie, but under different circumstances. History had deprived it of the noble role of liberating the people from feudal serfdom, but its new mission was no less imposing and no more altruistic. It was to assume the leadership of the Indian people, united and led in the struggle for national liberation, which would be achieved by replacing the foreign domination with the democratic dictatorship of the native bourgeoisie.

As soon as the young intelligentsia began to extend its activities to the political field, the British government found in it no longer a support, which it really had been, so long as it had occupied itself in attacks against native social and religious institutions. The British government was not slow in foreseeing the inevitable. It could read a serious menace in the apparently tame and impotent agitation for representative institutions and an 'open door' to the public services. The demand for popular representation, however mild at first, heralded the appearance of a class which would sooner or later dispute the political supremacy of the British, and would do so in the name of the people united into a nation, demanding autonomy and democratic government.

In the years preceding the organization of the Indian National Congress in 1885, the industrial aspirations of the native capitalist class had been expressed in the growing number of modern factories, which however, could not thrive on account of the competition of imperialist capital, as well as the determined hostility of the Indian government. It was imminent that the intellectuals with political education would constitute a revolutionary factor, by agitating for the interests and grievances of their own class, as well as those of the struggling capitalists. The causes for a potential political movement had been accumulating, and the very disciples of English liberalism were going to put themselves at the head of this movement. The National Congress was founded with the object of ventilating 'popular grievances' and formulating 'national aspiration', in other words, to forward the grievances of the intellectuals who craved for higher positions, and the aspirations of the capitalist class to enter the industrial field. But the real sponsors of the Congress were not Indian nationalists, conscious of the full significance of what they were initiating, but a few patriotic English liberals, who were disturbed by the ominous clouds gathering in the political sky. The unfulfilled aspirations of the young intellectuals, backed by the nascent capitalist class, could be very well expected to turn into dissatisfaction, which might lead to developments more dangerous when too late to control the situation. A retired British official (A. O. Hume) of Gladstonian creed, who is called the Father of the Indian National Congress, called the attention of the government to the unrest of the 'masses' of India caused by the increasing alienation of the educated natives from the administration of the country. In helping the young liberal intellectuals organize the National Congress, Hume expected to provide them with a glittering toy so that they could be kept out of harm's length. He seemed to have impressed on the then Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, the policy of conferring on the Congress the official benediction, with the object of making it assume the role of 'Her Majesty's Opposition' at home. But one cannot conspire against history. Social forces cannot be deceived, not even by the cleverness of imperial liberalism. Subjectively disciples and admirers of British constitutionalism, the Indian intellectuals objectively were the defenders of the interests of the rising native bourgeoisie, the standard-bearers of nationalism. Therefore it was not long before the Indian followers of John Bright turned traitors to their political preceptors and became rank protectionists.

The first session of the Indian National Congress was celebrated in Bombay (1885), which was then the main industrial centre of the country, under the presidency of W. C. Banerji (sic), a prosperous lawyer. The tame character of the first Congress can be well judged from the fact that the English governor of the Province was requested to take the chair, and that it emphatically declared its loyalty to the Crown. The principal resolutions contained 1. the demand for the appointment of a Royal Commission on which the 'people of India' should be represented, to enquire into the composition of public services, and 2. the request for the expansion of the Legislative Council. So it is evident that it was only the grievances and claims of the intelligentsia which the Congress consciously focused. The economic interests of the bourgeoisie still remained an unseen force behind the scene.

But it was not long before the Congress took such a turn that its official and semi-official patrons had to lament their judgment. It was soon looked upon as a seditious body trying to create disaffection; because in spite of protestations of loyalty to British rule, it demanded the recognition of the 'living forces of elective principles' which, it contended, could not be realized without 'representative institutions'. The Government of India made some efforts to retain the loyal support of the intelligentsia. The Local Government Act of 1888 made some concessions in the municipal administration and the Indian Councils Act passed by the British Parliament in 1892, declared that the Government of India should rely more on the experience and advice of responsible Indians. These were evidently attempts to convince the Congress that the British Government was not a negation of the principles of democracy. But the political consciousness of the Indian liberal intellectual had outgrown the stage of apprenticeship. The demand was 'not for Consultative Councils, but for representative institutions'.

Although it represented the interests and expressed the grievances of the most advanced section of the Indian people, politically the Congress retained its reformist tendency. Education, constitutional convictions and above all, instinctive class-affiliation prevented the Congress leaders from questioning the 'benefits' of British rule. All they desired was that the government should become representative by including them in its organism. They could not possibly conceive of the idea of national independence, because their social position did not enable them to go to such an extent. Administrative reform to be achieved by constitutional means, therefore, remained their programme. The political ideal of the Congress in its earlier years is best typified in the following quotation from the speech made at its second annual session in 1886 by Madan Mohan Malaviya, today a radical nationalist demanding nothing less than complete self-government:

> It is not to the great British government that we should demonstrate the utility, the expediency, the necessity of representative institutions: it is

> surely unnecessary to say one word in support of such a cause to the British nation—the descendants of those great and brave men who fought and died to obtain for themselves, and to preserve intact for their children, these very institutions, which, taught by their example, we now crave. What is an Englishman without representative institutions? Why, not an Englishman at all, a mere sham, a base imitation, and I often wonder, when I look around at our nominally English magnates, how they have the face to call themselves Englishmen, and yet deny us representative institutions, and struggle to maintain despotic ones. Representative institutions are as much a part of the true Briton as his language and literature.

This passionate admiration was, indeed, not for the British government as such, neither did it signify "de-nationalization", because the man who pronounced the words is still a partisan of Hindu culture and has been one all through his long public career; it was fomented by the spontaneous enthusiasm for certain ideals held sacred by the liberal bourgeoisie of all countries. Democratic government is the political reflex of bourgeois society. Therefore it was but natural that the pioneers of the Indian bourgeoisie would hail enthusiastically the doctrines of democracy. In its earlier years, the ideal of the Congress was not a national government, but a democratic government, by which was meant that the civil administration of the country should be entrusted to the liberal intellectuals,—the forebears of a new social order.

The political reformism of the Congress was unavoidable. Its leaders were the pioneers of a national renaissance. They dreamt of an India marching in the path of social progress and economic evolution under the guidance of a government infused with the spirit of bourgeois liberalism. To them, absence of British rule signified the active revival of the forces of reaction in every aspect of life, political, social and religious. Therefore radical nationalism, having for its object the subversion of the British domination, could not be the programme of the Congress, not only because it was an impossibility, but [also because]* such an idea could not be entertained by the liberal intellectuals. Radical or extremist nationalism in those days, could not but be based on reactionary forces, whose success would entail a political retrogression to a monarchical state and the reinforcement of social and religious conservatism which such a political setback would surely bring about. The forces which would make for the overthrow of the foreign bourgeoisie without at the [same]* time threatening a social reaction, were yet in the process of evolution. The political reformism of the Congress was augmented by these revolutionary forces accumulating behind the scene. Revolutionary nationalism—

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* Inserts within square brackets not in the original. S. N. R.

nationalism which does not stand for social and political reaction—could not be evolved before the liberal bourgeoisie had acquired sufficient strength. The national liberation of India, which would put her people on the road to moral and material progress, is not to be realized by political movements with orthodox reactionary ideology. This is the mission of the progressive bourgeoisie, and those spiritual pioneers of the rising progressive bourgeoisie; the liberal intellectuals assembled in the first sessions of the National Congress, heralded the birth of a new India. Historically they were revolutionaries. They rebelled against two mighty forces, namely, those of social conservatism and religious superstition still dominating the Indian society, and the absolute political monopoly exercised by the foreign bourgeoisie.

The revolutionary role of these men becomes more apparent when we turn to their social tendencies. A man of the type of Mahadeva Govinda Ranade, whose patriotism has always been unimpeachable and whose personality stands as a landmark of the political renaissance of India, worked with the firm conviction that the progress of the Indian people depended on a radical readjustment. The patriotism of Ranade and his co-workers was revolutionary, in as much as it recognized the banefulness of the old religious corruptions and social customs and boldly declared war on them. It would be a serious mistake to call those brave men servile imitators, an epithet often ascribed to them by the adherents of orthodox nationalism, which originated as a reaction against the social radicalism of the Congress. If the fathers of the Congress devoted more time and energy to the discussion of social questions than to the agitation for a popular franchise, it was because they were the embodiment of a revolutionary force which was eating into the vitals of the old order, doomed to destruction. By bravely condemning the old they voiced the judgment of history, and indicated that the forces of native reaction were more detrimental to popular progress than the political domination of a foreign bourgeoisie. Based on social foundations of higher order, the British power was not to be shaken till the people of India would be stirred up by progressive ideals. New social relations bring about new political institutions. This law determined the psychology of the Indian intellectuals. A national state conducive to the growth of the bourgeoisie could not be expected to be built on the foundation of a social organism still greatly dominated by feudal traditions, patriarchal conservatism and religious superstition. These obstacles must be removed before India could be reborn to a new life. By declaring their desire to struggle on against time-honoured customs and institutions, these men proved themselves to be the vanguard of a social revolution to be carried through, not by the reformistic measures advocated by them, but by the imminent rise of the native bourgeoisie as the leader of the new society.

In its earlier days the social significance of the Congress outweighed its political role. Its programme of social reform was not actuated, as is generally believed, by the 'de-nationalizing' Western education of its leaders. None but a rank jingoist discriminates against knowledge on racial or national grounds. In course of its continuous evolution, the human race passes through various stages, which are everywhere marked by corresponding social ideologies and institutions. The simple accident of being born in diverse countries does not make of the various human communities isolated units, with different paths marked out for each. To discriminate against certain branches and kinds of human knowledge as outlandish and therefore to be looked upon with suspicion and as injurious is not a sign of healthy nationalism. One must not be ashamed to learn from the other when necessary. The period in which the European peoples made great progress in political, social, economic and cultural fields, saw India infested with civil wars and thus unable to keep pace with the modern world. Foreign conquest kept her in stagnation another hundred years. Consequently it was but natural that, in the scale of material civilization the people of India lagged behind. Not to recognize this historical fact and to sublimate this backwardness by clothing it in the glorious garb of a 'spiritual' civilization is the effort of reactionary forces. The so-called 'aggressive' nationalism, which refuses to learn anything from others and hugs the old traditions, is a questionable phenomenon, as it tends to prefer ignorance to knowledge.

The ideals of bourgeois society and the doctrines of a democratic state, which are the foundation of the material civilization of the modern world, happened first to be evolved by the European peoples. Left alone and uninterfered with by foreign conquest, India would have evolved political and social ideals of a similar nature. Because these are not the outcome of a particular European civilization, but are realized by every human community at a particular stage of economic progress. Foreign domination had been harmful to the Indian people, chiefly because it prevented their development and deprived them of the full benefit of these modern thoughts and institutions. If the foreigner could continue to dominate over India, it was because there did not exist in her population an element which tended to break down the old, in order to build a new social and political structure. The fact that the Indian intellectuals responded to the Europen social and political thoughts did not by any means betray slavishness; on the contrary, it proved that they were objectively revolutionary. Because these thoughts were not European,—a monopoly of the so-called Western peoples,—they were progressive ideals, and any one who would respond to them must have reached a stage of material development which spontaneously gives origin to such tendencies. Therefore Western education, instead of being a denationalizing factor, caused a national renaissance.

From the very beginning the Congress did not raise the standard of political revolution, but it did lay down the foundation on which the political nationalism of India was built subsequently. The demand for representative government challenged the right of the British rule in India, and established the theory that in the people was vested the sovereign authority. This was indeed a new departure in the political history of India. It not only questioned the legitimacy of the benevolent dictatorship of the British, but also signified opposition to that school of nationalism which in the name of freedom, would revive backward political institutions under native rulers. The programme of the Congress remained one of 'nation-building' till Tilak swept it with his doctrine of 'integral nationalism' in the closing years of the nineteenth century. Tilak's was a revolt more against the ideology and tactics of the Old Guard of the Congress than against Government. His theory was that the nationalism of India should be nourished with the native traditions, and that the nationhood of the Indian people was an accomplished fact in view of their religio-cultural unity. We will deal with this phase of nationalism later on.

The Congress assumed the title 'national' as if the bourgeoisie whom it represented was ordained providentially to be the custodian of the popular welfare. The small number of government officials, merchants, manufacturers, progressive landlords and intellectual liberals constituting it, believed themselves to be natural and legitimate representatives of the inarticulate masses. The grievances of the office-seeking intellectuals were put forth as those of the people. The ambitions of the native capitalist class were identified with the right of the nation. In the Congress were crystallized and through it were expressed the social ideals and political aspirations of an element of the people, which in spite of its numerical smallness, was intellectually competent and materially fitted to advocate the theory that India was a national unit and, as such, should have the rights and dignities of one. To this element, nationhood was a political conception, and the National Right of a people was to be asserted in the domain of material progress. The struggle against foreign Government was, therefore, (real)* in so far as it (foreign rule)* stood in the way of those sections of the people which were consciously feeling the urge of material advancement. This discontented class began to fight for its own benefit, but in order to prove that the foreign government was in the wrong, it must talk of national interest and popular representation. Thus the modern nationalism of India was based on the economic interest of the native bourgeoisie, and the programme of securing the needed protection for the latter's development as a potential factor in social-economics, was taken for that of nation-building.

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* The words 'real' and 'foreign rule' inserted within brackets were not in the 1922 edition. S. N. R.

The programme of 'social reform' which had been given precedence over political demands in the first sessions of the Congress, was gradually abandoned. This was not because the men assembled therein had lost their radicalism on social questions, but because it began to dawn upon them that the old customs and traditions could not be shaken until material conditions helpful to their preservation, were changed. Or in other words, they instinctively felt that until and unless the economic basis of Indian society was revolutionized, no radical change could be introduced in the social domain by criticism of the past and adoration of the golden future. For example, the caste system, which was a legitimate object of assault, could not be abolished by legislation, nor by agitation. Higher means of production, based on new property relations, had to be evolved before it could be uprooted. Even such a programme as the 'uplift of the depressed classes' could not be realized, because educational facilities were not available from the foreign government and the native bourgeoisie was not in a position to tackle the problem without the backing of the state. Indian society could be freed from the galling bondage of religious superstitions only by the dissemination of scientific knowledge; but the foreign government would be safely seated in power only so long as the people could be kept in ignorance. Therefore public education, one of the boons of the bourgeois state, was withheld determinedly, and the liberal reformers with all their sincere zeal, could not do anything worthwhile to dissipate the ignorance of the people. Its enthusiastic programme of social reform having been thus rendered futile and not to be realized, under the contemporary economic and political conditions, the Congress became a purely political body, given to the struggle for administrative and fiscal reforms. Its demand was to 'Indianize' the public services by giving more employment to the native intellectuals, and protection to the nascent indigenous industrial enterprises.

If the Indian adepts of English liberalism dared question the justice and beneficence of the doctrine of Free Trade, it was not that their faith in the bourgeois political philosophy had in any way been shaken, but because of the growth of an economic force which stood behind and determined their political ideology and activities. The modernized middle class, led by the liberal intelligentsia had entered the political arena. But its political struggle would remain impotent till sufficient economic power was acquired. Therefore the slogan of the national movement was the 'development of home industries', which meant the strengthening of the native capitalist class.

The political nationalism inaugurated by the Congress thus promised to become a bitter struggle between the two capitalist classes,—the native and the imperialist. The former sanctified its cause by christening it 'national', while the latter claimed to be ruling India for the welfare of her people. The struggle between the two elements of the same social character, however, could not break out into open hostility owing to the fact that one controlled the state power of a mighty capitalist empire, while the other was still in its infancy economically, and socially its leadership of an oppressed nation was but theoretical. It did not make any difference to the masses of the people, unquestionably oppressed by foreign capitalism, by whom they were exploited. National consciousness in the political sense, awakened in the bourgeoisie, was not to be found in the people. Under such circumstances, the struggle could not be anything but 'legal' and 'constitutional', as the Congress termed its agitation.

The aspirations of the intellectual and propertied middle-class were pressed with all the sanction of the precepts learned from English political seers. The tactics seemed to be to beat the British bourgeoisie with its own arguments. But already in the closing years of the century not much illusion was left. Newspapers voicing the sentiment of the Congress wrote in this strain: 'As there can be no revival of the Indian industry without some displacement of British industry, we understand the difficulty of ruling India for the people of India'. With the growth of this spirit of mistrust in the liberalism of the English bourgeoisie was brought to a close the first period of the modern political movement, which unquestionably laid the theoretical foundation of the struggle for national liberation, but did not exceed the bounds of constitutional agitation for democracy.

The period that followed was apparently more revolutionary, because its guiding principle was a challenge to the authority of a foreign power ruling another nation. Even the possibility of recognizing this authority, when democratized by including the available native element in it, was not admitted. But in socio-political significance this new phase was less revolutionary than the former, because its theory of 'integral nationalism' when put to practice would push the country into a backward stage of development in spite of national independence. Youthful impatience and unseen forces of reactionary conservatism brought about the apparently revolutionary violent outbursts which were the characteristics of this phase of the movement. And in these very causes lay its inherent weakness. But its unmixed influence was but of short duration, because in order to be potential, the interests of the rising industrial capital had to be made the motive force of the movement, which nevertheless, retained its orthodox and religious phraseology.

The new movement was not only a reaction against the political impotency of the Congress. Fundamentally it embodied the revolt of the spirit of orthodoxy and conservatism against the social radicalism of the prominent Congress leaders, particularly of Ranade and Telang in Bombay. Himself a young intellectual, educated according to the so-called de-nationalizing Western methods, and a disciple of Ranade, the leader of the new movement was Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who started his career as an enthusiastic worker in the field of social and educational reform. In the nineties, tendencies of religious reform were being expressed as if to counteract the wave of radicalism headed by the modernized intelligentsia. These tendencies took organized form in the 'Arya Samaj' in the north and the 'Ramakrishna Mission' in Bengal. The object was the rejuvenation of the teachings of Hinduism in order to make them compatible with the psychology created by modern education. But in fact, it was the resistance of the forces of conservatism and reaction trying to adapt themselves to the new environments. The glaring social corruptions and stifling religious superstitions could not be overlooked, even by the stoutest admirers of the spiritual civilization of the Aryans. The best that could be done and was done by those elements, which constituted the bulwark of the old, was to lay the blame on the degeneration brought about by time. The pristine purity of the original doctrines was vigorously upheld. And a national revival was advocated with the slogan of 'back to the Vedas' which even in the present moment finds an apostle in Gandhi. The new movement headed by Tilak perhaps unconsciously transplanted into the political field this tendency of looking backward, in order to find inspiration for a forward march.

The advanced social views of its leaders had naturally kept the activities of the Congress confined within a narrow circle of rich intellectuals and liberal bourgeoisie. The great majority of the population was left entirely outside its influence. The material and intellectual condition of the masses had not changed in response to the political postulates and the social radicalism of the men assembled in the Congress, which, therefore, failed to enlist any large following. The farsightedness of its constructive program was not understood by the youthful elements, which had more reason to be dissatisfied with the British government. There was great unemployment among the lower middle class to which these youthful elements belonged. They were mostly students, many more of whom were annually graduating from the schools and universities than could be absorbed in the government services or the liberal professions open to them. The students in the colleges looked ahead in their life and found all roads to prosperity and distinction blocked. New education, new environments of the modern cities had aroused new ideas, new aspirations in them. Economic desperation drove them to an extreme, one way or the other. The majority succumbed in the struggle, turning into semi-proletarianized petty intellectuals submerged in degenerating apathy, devoid of all social and political vision. A small number rebelled. But not having considerable incomes from government service, or profitable professions, or trade or industry or landed property or several of them combined, as was the case with the members of the Congress, the rebellious elements of the lower middle class found no consolation in the idle deliberations and programme of gradual reform of the Congress. They wanted to have an immediate change and a radical one at that. Constitutionalism did not appeal to them. They were driven to violence which, however, proved futile to lead them anywhere.

The dissatisfied* members of the lower middle class jeered at the Congress, because the redress of their grievances was not included in its programme, which advocated the interests only of those who were already in a relatively better position than themselves. It demanded more positions for those who were already well posted in comparison with the lower middle-class youths, whose university degrees hardly enabled them to keep starvation off their doorsteps. The demand for protection of the native industries was calculated to help the rich become richer. In short, the petty bourgeoisie found itself left out of the scheme of national advancement put forth by rich intellectuals and capitalists assembled in the Congress which, however, had repeatedly held British exploitation responsible for the economic backwardness and bankruptcy of the Indian people. Having learned from the Congress leaders that foreign exploitation was the root of all the economic suffering of the people, the lower middle-class youths revolted against the tactics of their political preceptors. The rational economic theory of the Congress that India was poor because she was kept in an agrarian stage in an industrial age, was not appreciated by the impatient youths, who argued that nothing could be achieved unless political autonomy was realized and that it was not to be gained by prayer and petitions. As leader of this point of view, Tilak vigorously assailed what he called the 'piecemeal' policy of the Congress, and put forward his programme of 'integral nationalism' which meant to say that the nationhood of the Indian people was an historically accomplished fact, and that its right to self-government was not conditional upon any preliminary evolution, either social or economic. This challenge to the older leaders rallied the discontented and rebellious lower middle-class youths around Tilak.

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* The word in the 1922 edition is 'satisfied,' which is clearly a printing error. S. N. R.

But to have condemned the old policy as impotent was not enough. It still remained for Tilak and his followers to find the force with which their 'integral nationalism' could be rendered more effective. If the old leaders had failed to make the Indian people appreciate the philosophies of Bentham and the Mills, neither could the *Duties of Man* as depicted by Mazzini nor the *Social Contract* of Jean Jacques Rousseau make any better impression, the patriotic efforts of Tilak notwithstanding. The people of India, excepting the small circle of the middle class, were not materially fitted to respond to one or the other. The forces that could unite them in a fight for political independence had not yet fully developed. In the bourgeoisie was to be found the force, but the bourgeoisie could not be politically powerful until it should have reached a certain stage of economic advancement. By advocating the growth of the bourgeoisie, the Congress stood at the vanguard of the objectively revolutionary force. The theory of nationalism expressed in the person and preachings of Tilak, ignored the social law that political nationalism in modern times could not exist without an economic foundation. The task of creating a modern nation out of a people in a backward stage of social progress belongs to the middle class, which under normal conditions, leads the struggle against feudal autocracy. In India, this struggle happened to be against a foreign ruler which had largely destroyed feudalism as a factor of social-economics, but the exploitation of imperialist capital had prevented the people from outgrowing the social and economic order that prevails under patriarchy and feudalism. However, divested of idealistic verbiage, both the socio-political formulas, namely, liberation from Serfdom and National Independence, make for the economic aggrandizement of the middle class. In the first case, the evolution of higher means of production necessitates the mobilization of wage-earners freed from the feudal yoke, in order that they can sell their labour-power in the open market of capitalist competition; and the second signifies the installation of the native bourgeoisie in the political power so that it can carry on freely the exploitation of the manpower and the natural resources of the nation. Therefore the political nationhood of a people is conditional upon the rise of the bourgeoisie; and the economic evolution which makes the bourgeoisie a paramount factor in the society, destroys all old social institutions of a feudal and patriarchal character.

Indian Nationalism, indifferent to or scornful of the steps necessary for the development of the bourgeoisie, was therefore, not more revolutionary, but was actuated by forces of social and religious reaction against the progressive tendencies of the Congress, which focused the ideology of the coming society. The reactionary forces contributing to the doctrines of 'integral nationalism' stood revealed, when Tilak declared that Indian nationalism could not be purely secular, that it must be based on Hindu orthodoxy. In its earlier days, orthodox nationalism assailed the Congress more for its social radicalism and religious heresy than for its reformistic political programme. A national independence, which would push Indian society back to Hindu orthodoxy, was indeed not a very revolutionary ideal. If material welfare should be sacrificed for things spiritual, then why should the people be asked to fight for political independence which, after all, is a secular matter? Hindu religion had not been violated by the British conquerors; so it was not necessary to defend it. On the contrary, the British government had always been very anxious to ensure the perpetuation of the religious superstitions and beliefs which kept the people in blissful ignorance, resigned to their lot however hard, as ordained by a super-human power. Advocates of Hindu orthodoxy consciously or unconsciously desired to keep the people in the darkness of ignorance and submission.

When we remember that Tilak parted ways with his preceptor on account of the controversy over the Age of Consent Bill of 1891, the social tendencies behind his political theories become palpable. His fierce and bold criticism of the Bill brought him before the public eye.as a stout defender of Hindu orthodoxy. The Age of Consent Bill proposed to increase the age limit to twelve instead of ten when a girl's consent to her marriage would be legally valid. Being intended for reforming the custom of child marriage, which had given origin to unspeakable abuses, this measure enlisted the sympathy and support of the liberal intellectuals of the Congress. Tilak's argument was that the foreign government should not be allowed to interfere in the social institutions. He entered the political arena as the champion of orthodox nationalism as against the 'de-nationalizing patriotism' of the Congress leaders, and sought to unite the people in a fight for the defence of national religion and culture. He put forward the theory of 'integral nationalism' because the evolutionary nationalism of the Congress was calculated to disrupt the national life. He demanded that on the strength of her old glories and traditions, India should have self-government at once in order that her national heritage of religious orthodoxy, social conservatism and patient resignation to earthly suffering for the sake of spiritual uplift, might not be defiled by the rise of a progressive social force.

The movement of national renaissance inaugurated by the Congress, which in its earlier years was but the spiritual reflection of the social forces most revolutionary at that period, threatened to be more destructive to the reactionary elements than had been the British government. The constitutional democracy or evolutionary nationalism advocated by the liberal bourgeoisie led by the intellectuals, spelled doom to the old social heritage and religious orthodoxy. Orthodox nationalism was and still is more of a spontaneous reaction of the moribund old order against this progressive force, than a revolutionary struggle against foreign rule. In fact, the British government had always been rather friendly disposed towards the reactionary forces as expressed by religious orthodoxy and social conservatism, and those elements of the population which actively focused these reactionary tendencies had always been the mainstay of the foreign domination. The British government, in spite of being a bourgeois institution, patronized the reactionary tendencies because, by keeping the people ignorant on the pretext of spiritual uplift, these proved themselves greatly helpful to the former. The memorable Queen's Proclamation of 1858 and other protestations made solemnly on various occasions, assured the native reactionary forces of a free hand in the field of social and religious exploitation. This being the case, it is to be deduced that orthodox nationalism, which fought for political power in order to preserve the ancient culture and save the purity of religion, was a revolt primarily against the native forces making for the disruption of these cherished treasures of the past. And these revolutionary forces were crystallizing in the Congress under radical leaders, whose programme was not to revive the India of the Rishis (patriarchal sages) with its contented handicraft workers saturated with ignorance and dosed in the name of religion, but to build a new society on the ruins of the old. Orthodox nationalism, in the social sense, was the resistance of the forces of reaction against the ominous radicalism of the 'de-nationalized' intellectuals who led the Congress. The same forces, whose military explosion was the Mutiny of 1857, could be discovered behind the political theories of the orthodox nationalism of half-a-century later.

National Social Conferences had been held annually ever since 1887, in spite of the opposition of the conservative elements which found their way into the Congress. The growth of orthodox nationalism strengthened the latter, whose point of view on the question of social reform was thus formulated in the Congress of 1895:

> The raison d'etre for excluding social questions from the deliberations of the Congress, is that if it were to take up such questions, it might lead to serious differences, ultimately culminating in a schism, and it is a matter of first importance to avoid a split.

The position of the radicals, on the other hand, was put forth by their leader Ranade, who held that the political movement of a people could not be separated from its social problems. In 1900, Ranade said, 'You cannot have a good social system when you find yourself low in the scale of political right, nor can you be fit to exercise political rights and privileges unless your social system is based upon reason and justice.' Here is raised the sanctimonious voice of a petty bourgeois moralist. The intricate social problems of India, with their roots struck deep in the traditions of the hoary past, could not be solved by the reformism of a moralist. But the 'reason and justice' of a bourgeois intellectual, whose sincerity, by the way, is not to be questioned, were not hollow words. They were based upon an imperious force which would bring about in time a new society based upon a new code of ethics. They meant to say 'you cannot make the people at large a conscious political unit so long as you are for keeping learning a monopoly of the Brahman oligarchy; you cannot unite the people in a struggle for political advancement so long as you tell them to sacrifice material things for a spiritual life; you cannot make the people fight for national independence or democratic government, which will put you in power, unless you tell them that the future will be better than the present; you cannot expect the people to move forward carrying you to power on their shoulders, unless you free them from the influences of feudal and patriarchal customs, which are hostile to the modern political concepts.' These words meant all this and many more revolutionary doctrines preached by the bourgeoisie of all countries in a particular stage of social development. It is nevertheless true that society based on the 'reason and justice' of the bourgeois libertarians, does not end, but intensifies the exploitation of the majority by the minority. Only then does it become naked, shorn of all the religious and spiritual hypocrisies which kept the people in ignorance, resigned to their slavery. In bourgeois society, the sting of exploitation is felt by the masses directly and the reaction against it is eventually provoked. That is, the people consciously begin their march on the road to progress and emancipation. The justice and reason of a bourgeois libertarian are the spiritual expression of a rising social force, which breaks up the decayed and stifling old order and plunges society into a bitter struggle which exacts torrents of tears and rivers of blood. Patient suffering comes to an end, and the stagnation of the ignorant becomes a struggle of the awakened. This is a movement forward, and the radical nationalism of the Congress stood, though unconsciously, for this revolutionary forward movement. Consequently, it was a sworn enemy of the forces of reaction, still strong under the fostering care of the British government. Orthodox nationalism was the political outburst of these dying forces of reaction.

The problematical realization of the programme of 'aggressive nationalism' depended on the political potentiality of these forces of reaction and conservatism. The aggressive exponents of orthodox nationalism, including Tilak himself, invoked the teachings of the Hindu scriptures and philosophy to serve the purpose of a modern political movement. It was an impossible task fraught with grave danger. For example, the Anti-Cow-Killing Society, founded by Tilak obviously as an instrument of political agitation, soon degenerated, as was to be expected, into an organ of extreme religious orthodoxy. He delved into history to find inspiration for the present and sought to produce a magnetic charm in the personality of the Marhatta hero Sivaji. Festivals to celebrate Sivaji's birthday were organized and stirring speeches were made in the name of religion, which was supposed to be defiled by the foreign rule. The orthodox spirit of 'aggressive nationalism' crystallized in the formation of such organizations as the 'Society for the removal of obstacles to Hindu religion'. The very name speaks for the nature and social tendency of such organizations.

Orthodox nationalism, however, remained impotent in the field of practical politics. It thrived in the secret revolutionary societies composed of a small number of discontented middle-class youths. Orthodox nationalism, which rallies all the forces of reaction under its banner, may temporarily appeal to the imagination of the ignorant people, but never can be of any permanent strength. Because the national liberation of a people from capitalist domination, such as the British government is, can be achieved only by the development of progressive forces objectively revolutionary. Modern political nationalism is a progressive movement, therefore its motive force cannot be found in religious orthodoxy and social conservatism. This social law was vindicated when the orthodox element in the national movement, subsequently organized as the Extremist wing of the Congress, had to take the cue from the evolutionary radical leaders on the stage of pragmatic politics.

In spite of its orthodoxy and the desire for reviving the golden days of yore, the Extremist Party became a political force only when it came to the conclusion that the real fight had to take place on the economic field. Aggressive nationalists proved themselves more revolutionary than the old constitutionalist leaders when their aggressiveness was brought to bear upon the tactics, not of social reform, but of the best and most effective way to foment the growth of the native bourgeoisie. It criticized those who believed that the government would ever concede protection to Indian industries. Swadeshi (to encourage the use of indigenous articles) and Boycott of foreign goods were put forward as the best means of helping the development of national industries. The evolutionary radicals, who were called Moderates, accepted the programme of Swadeshi and Boycott which, however, proved to be premature in practice.

This doubtful tactical triumph of the Extremists was gained when they recognized the necessity of giving predominance to material questions. By adopting the programme of Swadeshi and Boycott they repudiated their own principles and abandoned their original orthodox ideal. Because these measures were resorted to with the object of helping the growth of native industries, that is, for strengthening the national bourgeoisie, which by its very nature, was an irreconcilable enemy of the old traditions and established social institutions based on orthodoxy. The prospective rise of a modern bourgeoisie heralded such a revolution in the economic foundation of Indian society, that the national heritage of spiritual culture and religious beliefs, the defence and glorification of which was the motive forçe of orthodox nationalism, would become untenable. The reborn Indian nation would outgrow them, and its fight would be for progress still further ahead.

The political ascendancy of the Extremist party forced the National Congress to adopt the programme of Swadeshi in its twenty-first session held at Benares (1905), and of boycotting British goods the next year. The triumph was the more remarkable because the Congress gave up its former policy of agitating the government and accepted the Extremist point of view under the presidency of two of its most outstanding veterans, who had been staunch believers in constitutionalism and evolutionary progress both in the economic and political fields. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the great political opponent of Tilak, launched the programme of Swadeshi, which had already been adopted in Calcutta under the leadership of Bepin Chandra Pal, as an answer to the Partition of the Province of Bengal. So long as orthodox nationalism had desired to prove itself more revolutionary by its religious fervour and social conservatism, the Marhatta country in the Province of Bombay remained its stronghold, and Tilak its greatest expounder. But its political strength, expressed in the form of the Extremist Party, was first felt in the Province of Bengal under the leadership of Bepin Chandra Pal and Arabinda Ghose, both of whom were men of modern education and keen intellect.

It had been long since the British government looked for some pretext in order to nullify the Permanent Settlement of Bengal, which had created and perpetuated a rich landholding class. The necessity for having such a privileged class, to the detriment of the public exchequer, had ceased to exist. The government of Lord Curzon divided the Province of Bengal into two parts in 1905. The object was two-fold. First, to nullify the Permanent Settlement and second, to foment ill-feeling between the Hindus and the Mohamedans. The first object would be achieved by ordering a new settlement of land in both the new provinces, which were so constituted territorially as to include areas Regulated and Non-Regulated under the Permanent Settlement. The second object was to be realized by creating an overwhelming Hindu majority in one and a Muslim majority in the other province. Such a distribution of the population would enable the government to play one community against the other, on the pretext of protecting the minority.

Religious nationalism of the orthodox as well as reformed school had begun to come into evidence in the province of Bengal since the first years of the twentieth century. Although its political philosopher and leader were found subsequently in the persons of Arabinda Ghose and Bepin Chandra Pal respectively, its fundamental ideology was conceived by a young intellectual of petty-bourgeois origin. He was Narendra Nath Dutta, subsequently known by the religious nomenclature of Swami Vivekananda. While still a student in the University of Calcutta, Dutta felt the rebellious spirit affecting the lower middle-class intellectuals. It was in the early nineties. He was moved by the sufferings of the common people. De-classed socially, possessing a keen intellect, he made a spectacular plunge into the philosophical depths of Hindu scripture and discovered in the cult of Vedantism (religious Monism of the Hindus) a sort of socialistic, humanitarian religion. He decried scathingly orthodoxy in religion as well as in social customs. He was the picturesque, and tremendously vigorous embodiment of the old trying to readjust itself to the new. Like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Dutta was also a prophet of Hindu nationalism. He also was a firm believer in the cultural superiority of the Indian people, and held that on this cultural basis should be built the future Indian nation. But he was not a partisan of orthodoxy in religion: to social conservatism, he was a veritable iconoclast. He had the courageous foresight, or perhaps instinct, which convinced him that if religion was to be saved, it must be given a modern garb; if the priest was still to hold his sway over the millions of Hindu believers, he must modify his old crude ways; if the intellectual aristocracy of the fortunate few was to retain its social predominance, spiritual knowledge must be democratized. The reaction of native culture against the intrusion of Western education ran wild, so to say, in the person of Vivekananda and the cult of Universal Religion he formulated in the name of his preceptor, Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He preached that Hinduism, not Indian nationalism, should be aggressive. His nationalism was a spiritual imperialism. He called on young India to believe in the spiritual mission of India. The following quotation from his voluminous writings and speeches can be taken as the fundaments of his philosophy, on which was subsequently built the orthodox nationalism of the de-classed young intellectuals, organized into secret societies advocating violence and terrorism for the overthrow of British rule. Vivekananda said:

> Materialism and all its miseries cannot be conquered by materialism. Armies, when they attempt to conquer armies, only multiply and make brutes of humanity . . . Spirituality must conquer the West. Now is the time to work for India's spiritual ideals penetrating deep into the West. We must go out. We must conquer the world through our spirituality and philosophy. We must do it or die. The condition of Indian national life, of unashamed and vigorous national life, is the conquest of the world by Indian thought.

This romantic vision of conquering the world by spiritual superiority electrified the young intellectuals, whose desperate economic position made them restive. Victims of the existing order, they were rebelling against it and would destroy it, if possible. The British domination stood in the way as the root of all evils. Thus, an intelligently rebellious element, which otherwise would have been the vanguard of the exploited class in a social struggle, had to give in to national pre-occupations, and contribute itself to a movement for the immediate overthrow of foreign rule, not for progress forward, but in order to go back to an imaginary golden age—the fountainhead of India's spiritual heritage. This youthful band of rebels fanatically believing in the spiritual mission of their Motherland, embodied in themselves the clash of two forces; that of Reaction inducing them to put their nationalism on a religious basis,—to hoist the banner of so-called 'agressive nationalism' which proposed to put up a determined resistance to the menaces of materialism in order to preserve the assumed superiority of their spiritual heritage; and that of Revolution, driving them to political nihilism, together with tendencies towards religious or utopian socialism without, however, any appreciation of the laws of social progress. In their religiousness and wild spiritual imperialism, they embodied the reactionary social forces. Their no less sincere and ardent desire, on the other hand, to educate the people, to improve the latter's conditions, to revive the golden age unsullied by the vices of the existing system, were generated by the objectively revolutionary forces heralding a coming social struggle. Despite the apparent predominance of their religious tendencies in the ideological domain, it was the latter spirit of revolt, generated as it was by a powerful material cause, which really determined their activities and made them a power behind the Extremist Party. But the de-classed character of the members of these secret revolutionary societies becomes clear when we see them pay but little attention to the programme of the Congress, which whether under the leadership of the Moderates or the Extremists, advocated the interests of the bourgeoisie. Their de-classed character enabled them to avoid falling helpless victims to the reactionary tendencies running through them. Revolutionary forces expressed through them got the upper hand.

The revolutionary idealism of the secret societies was sumptuously fed with suitable interpretations of the Hindu scriptures. Aggressive nationalism must be self-sufficient. It must exclude the necessity of outside inspiration for its development. Therefore, the ideology of a modern political movement had to be drawn from the fountain of national philosophy. Complete national independence, which was its ideal, was to be more of a spiritual uplift than political progress. The philosopher of aggressive nationalism, Arabinda Ghose, who adapted the teachings of Vivekananda to political purposes, said, 'Achievement of Swaraj (self-government) will develop Indian spirituality.' On another occasion he declared: 'British rule and Western civilization for which it stands, threaten the life of Hinduism.' Thus the ideal of aggressive nationalism could not be realized, unless foreign domination was overthrown. And for the destruction of foreign domination, all sorts of foreign means were welcome. For example, the spiritual idealists resorted to bombs and dynamite and pistols; and this practice was justified by ruling from the scriptures.

The partition of Bengal brought a new element into the anti-British movement. It was the landholding class, which had so far been the most loyal supporter of the government. But the partition threatened to injure the privileged position of the landed aristocracy, whose traditional loyalty was thus tampered with. The agitation against the partition brought the aggressive nationalists led by Bepin Chandra Pal, into political prominence. Bombs and dynamite were supplemented by the programme of fomenting national industries by means of Swadeshi and Boycott. It was argued by those who came to be known as the Extremist Party that nothing could be secured by petitioning which, they held, had been the tactical principle of the Congress so far. Demands must be made, and means should be devised to back the demands. Thus the Extremist Party, in spite of its ideals of spiritual nationalism, materialized itself on a political platform, which was ratified by the Twenty-second Congress held in Calcutta (1906) under the presidency of the veteran constitutional democrat, Dadabhoy Naoroji, who not only approved the fighting programme of Swadeshi and Boycott, but declared that the ideal of the Indian National Congress was Swaraj, that is, Self-government.

The cause of this change in the policy of the Congress is not to be looked for in the apparent vigorousness of the orthodoxy which characterized the youthful revolutionaries standing behind the Extremist

Party. It was not the spiritual nationalism of the orthodox that proved itself more revolutionary, and consequently more powerful, than the 'de-nationalized' patriotism of the Congress. On the contrary, it was the material forces of revolution which proved triumphant over the reaction clothed in orthodoxy. Three material factors contributed to the victory of the Extremist Party: 1. the still slow but steady development of native industrial capital, 2. the discontent created by growing unemployment among the lower middle-class youths, and 3. the disaffection of the landed aristocracy, whose privileged position was threatened by the partition of Bengal. If the Congress abandoned its former tactics of seeking government protection for the development of native industries, it was not that its old leaders had turned orthodox nationalists. They still believed that the national regeneration of India was conditional upon the rise of a modern bourgeoisie. The programme of Swadeshi and Boycott was intended for the advancement of national industries. In 1905 the Congress adopted this programme because it perceived the rise of those forces which heralded the advent of a new industrial India.

The adoption of the programme of Swadeshi and Boycott did not signify the defeat of the progressive liberals; on the contrary, it vindicated their social tendency, which was objectively revolutionary. It was the orthodox nationalism which was vanquished, because by subscribing to the programme of industrial development, it practically surrendered its fundamental principles. It tacitly admitted that it was not the old spiritual heritage, but a modern bourgeoisie with a materialistic philosophy, that was going to save India as a nation. In moving the resolution on the poverty of the Indian people in the Benares Congress of 1905, Tilak himself admitted that the growth of modern industries would alone solve the problem. Thus, the greatest prophet of orthodox nationalism was forced to pay homage to that force against whose social tendencies, as expressed in the earlier Congress, he revolted, and which would make the cherished ideal of spiritual civilization an impossibility.

The theory of 'integral nationalism' formulated by Tilak was subsequently accorded a philosophico-spiritual sublimity by Pal and Ghose; but it had to cut loose from its rigid orthodox moorings, which invoked only the forces of reaction of an apparently violent nature, but of little durable strength. The surrender of its intrinsic principles in favour of more revolutionary social forces signified the inherent impotency of the reactionary tendencies that ran through its ideological structure. It revealed the impossibility of building the future after the image of the past, however admirable, however ideal the latter might be. It gave an ominous warning that it was the sordid material interest of the bourgeoisie, a comparatively small class of the society, and not the 'spiritual uplift' of the people, that was the motive force behind the movement for national independence. The 'integral nationalism' of the Extremist Party became a political force when it entered the struggle for material benefit, and that too of a small class of exploiters. Although its abstract philosophical ideology still remained couched in modernized orthodoxy with a tint of mysticism, the cardinal points in its political programme dealt with things temporal. It could hardly be distinguished from modern nationalism, in that it also advocated the development of a new economic basis of society, which the growth of capitalist industrial production would inevitably entail.

The rise of the bourgeoisie and the dissipation of the old social order, were factors indispensable for the success of Indian nationalism. Everything should be sacrificed on the altar of the coming national deity, the bourgeoisie. This was to take place, in spite of all the talk about the spirituality of Indian nationhood. Besides the struggle with the foreign enemy, there was another struggle of greater significance inside the national movement. This was a social strife, a struggle between the old and the new, between the forces of reaction and those of progress. As was ordained by the imperious verdict of history, the latter proved triumphant. The nationalism of the lower middle class, whose economic condition must make it more revolutionary than the rich liberal intellectuals, went on gradually extricating itself from the quagmire of orthodoxy. In the field of pragmatic politics, it took the lead from the progressive elders, and soon went ahead of them. It could do so, not on account of its orthodox and spiritual philosophy, but in spite of it, because the latter failed to prevent the material laws from asserting themselves. The lower middle class was economically bankrupt; there was no hope for it but in a radical change of the existing order of society. The rich intellectuals and the propertied bourgeoisie could not help being cautious, despite their social progressiveness, since they needed the protection of an established government. But the proletarianized lower middle class, which was the social origin of 'integral nationalism' had nothing to stake, and therefore could afford to be more reckless and more extreme in its political views.

In 1907 the programme of the Extremist Party, as formulated by Bepin Chandra Pal, stood as follows:

1. Promotion of education as widely as possible.
2. Raising of national volunteers.
3. Development of national industries.
4. Establishment of a political organization with the object of assuming the functions of national government when the time will came.

With this programme, conspicuous by the absence of its original orthodoxy of creed as formulated by Tilak, 'integral nationalism' dominated the Congress of 1906 which declared Swaraj to be its political ideal. Defence of Dharma (religion) and the Cow (held sacred by the Hindus) were replaced by Swadeshi (encouragement of home industries) and Boycott. Thus it was proved that orthodoxy was not the weapon with which such a mighty modern enemy as British Imperialism could be fought. A hundred and fifty years of determined, systematic suppression could not kill the germs which were to develop into the modern bourgeoisie, which eventually was to be born in the course of evolution. In order to fall in with the scheme of this process of social evolution, orthodox nationalism had to bow down before imperious material laws, in spite of its ideal of spirituality. It could not have become a factor in the modern political movement had it persisted in clinging to its original practice.

The Boycott, however, failed to achieve any serious result. Swadeshi propaganda found the common people rather lukewarm. Economic fallacies involved in these steps were responsible for the failure. Nevertheless, machine industries owned by native capital received a considerable impetus, and the political leaders learned a lesson. They discovered that the popular support behind the Congress was not strong enough to warrant an uncompromising struggle with the government. The latter, on its part, met the liberal bourgeoisie half-way with petty concessions, and came down upon Extremists with the heavy hand of repression. Lord Morley's policy of 'rallying the Moderates' was a recognition of the dynamic forces of revolution contained in the progressive elements of Indian society. The object, however, was not to give full sanction to the aspirations of the bourgeoisie, but rather to deceive it by worthless administrative reform. The Moderates accepted the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909, not as valuable concessions in themselves, but as the beginning of a new era.

The following years saw a steady growth of native industrialism, in spite of the fact that the government still persisted in its policy of obstruction. But the economic basis of imperialism itself had changed. Capital was being exported to the colonies, in an ever increasing amount. The industrialization of India had begun, and the native bourgeoisie could no longer be excluded altogether.

The questionable success of aggressive tactics once more convinced the Moderates of the prudence of evolutionary methods. They looked dubiously upon the sentimental enthusiasm stirred up by the orthodox nationalists, whose reactionary social tendencies appealed to the people, kept in ignorance by the carefully manipulated policy of the British government. But the forces of reaction also had lost their potentiality, in consequence of the loss of an economic basis. They were largely maintained by the artificial stimulation given by the British government. Therefore, the faint popular response to orthodox nationalism was merely sentimental and temporary. If the masses of the people remained apathetic to the national movement sanctified with religion, it was not the foreign rule that was to be blamed for it. The popular apathy was the result of the social institutions and religious teachings of the past. In order to be successful, modern nationalism, instead of glorifying those institutions and teachings making for the present apathy, should base itself upon the forces and tendencies that tend to disrupt and dissipate them, and that promise to infuse new vigour in the social organism as a result of new property relations.

The attempt of the Moderates to rescue the Congress from what they considered the reckless tactics of the Extremists, resulted in the split of 1907. The following years saw the Moderates in the background, leaving the political arena not so much to the Extremists as to the extra-Congress revolutionary organizations, which dominated the situation less by political agitation than by terrorist activities. Persecution of its principal leaders including Tilak, who was sentenced to six years hard labour in 1908, broke down the Extremist Party. A year and a half in jail (1908–09) brought the philosopher and ascetic in Arabinda Ghose into predominance, but he practically retired from politics. Pal appeared to be bewildered by the extremely contradictory tendencies of his own ideas. Bourgeois radicalism coupled with religious reformism rendered his political vision rather foggy. He migrated to London (1908) to propagandize the British democracy, thus undertaking an act for which he and his party fellows had heaped insults on the Moderates. The astounding change in his political convictions became evident when on leaving London in 1912 he declared:

> Should Providence offer me choice of absolute independence for India with one hand, and the alternative of self-government within the Empire with the other, I would unhesitatingly accept the latter.

This statement betrayed the modification, if not abandonment, of his former theory of 'aggressive nationalism' which would not permit any foreign element to enter into the making of the Indian nation. It was admitted that the spiritual civilization of India would not satisfy the needs of a modern nation, and that the benefits of the 'soulless' Western civilization were necessary. Progressive liberalism was getting the upper hand of the religious mysticism in Pal's nationalistic philosophy. Revolutionary tendencies overwhelmed the forces of reaction focused through him. His pathetic desire for the imperial connection, in itself, was but a sign of subjective weakness; but this desire originated in a hidden mistrust of all those ideals cherished by orthodox nationalism.

The practical extermination of the Extremist Party did not stamp out orthodox nationalism, which found a stronghold in the secret revolutionary societies, whose programme was the overthrow of British domination by means of terrorist campaigns, to culminate in an uprising at a suitable opportunity. The members of these secret organizations, which outlived years of severest persecution by the government, were more romantic ascetics of Jesuitic character than revolutionaries with a political vision. Through them were expressed the forces of reaction and revolution. They were the product of a society in a great crisis, which was marked by a fanatic resistance of the old to the inevitable appearance of the new. Both these conflicting forces with their origin in the material background of social disintegration on the one hand and readjustment on the other, acted and reacted on the psychology of these young men organized in secret revolutionary societies, and produced in them political nihilism, social confusion and mystic religious orthodoxy. To them national independence meant spiritual imperialism. Clarification of the political tendencies of these fanatical ascetics could not take place until the class cleavage in the society became more glaring and more cruel. And since class cleavage was to follow the development of the bourgeoisie, the field of activity of these ardent revolutionaries remained confined to futile conspiracies, until the society underwent the necessary transformation. In every respect proletarianized by the capitalist society, these lower middle-class intellectuals were objectively social anarchists. National pre-occupations clouded their vision of social antagonism, and made them fall temporary and unconscious victims of the forces of reaction. Their natural tendencies towards religious socialism were taken by storm by the romantic ideal of a great spiritual mission awaiting the Indian nation.

The years preceding the great world war saw the recuperation of the bourgeois political tendencies in the revived Congress, which had played a rather insignificant role in the years following the disaster of 1907. In 1910 the Congress was reorganized by the right-wing moderates. An English liberal, Sir William Wedderburn, was called to preside, as if to vivify the thanks for the Morley-Minto Reforms. Then followed a period of calm, to be disturbed by a violent storm in the first years of the war, when the secret revolutionary societies made a determined, but abortive attempt at a national uprising. Subsequently, the Congress became the fighting political apparatus of the bourgeoisie united upon a common platform, until the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 brought a split. But the most outstanding feature of this period was the appearance of a new factor on the political field. This was the working class.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Present Situation

Review and Perspective

Strong cross-currents have always been the feature of the political movement of modern India. In the last three years, this feature has become more and more remarkable in proportion as the nationalist movement acquired strength and assumed dimensions positively alarming to the British authorities. It is since 1918 that the movement for national liberation began to spread beyond the narrow circle of the middle class and affect the masses of the people. The growing disaffection of the people at large has added potentiality to the nationalist movement. But the very awakening of the masses, which has enabled the political movement of the bourgeoisie to outgrow the stage of agitation and propaganda and enter into an active fight, has at the same time brought into evidence another cross-current which threatens to turn the tide in the near future. It marks the initiation of a triangular fight, in which class antagonism and the national struggle will be intensified side by side. The development of the bourgeoisie stiffens the national struggle as well as intensifies the class cleavage by creating a proletarian class. This process of class readjustment has been going on in India within the last few years and the political movement must be affected by it.

Indian nationalism, whether of the progressive character and of evolutionary tactics, as advocated by the Moderates now in League with the Imperialist Government, or based on the integralist theory of the Extremists, orthodox in social tendencies, is fundamentally a bourgeois movement. Excepting the religious orthodox,—whose violent outbursts not so much against the British Government as against the 'Western Civilization' it stands for, do not make them any less the exponents of the forces of reaction,—all shades of opinion in the national movement tend, consciously or unconsciously, to the enhancement of the material interests of the intellectual and propertied middle class. Even the reactionary nationalism of the orthodox religionists, in its purely political activities, finds itself obliged to back the bourgeoisie. This was proved when the greatest stalwart of religious nationalism, Tilak, formulated the theory of attaining Swaraj by fostering the growth of indigenous industries. At the present moment, Gandhi also tries to save the spiritual civilization of India through the aggrandizement of the merchants and manufacturers.

The representative institutions demanded by the evolutionary Moderates, when fully inaugurated, will open the gates of the paradise lost more than a hundred and fifty years ago, to the intellectual and capitalist bourgeoisie. Free access to the higher administrative posts will be allowed to the former, while fiscal autonomy will mean the protection of Indian industries by means of tariff barriers against all foreign competitors, including England herself. Only in that case, boycott of foreign goods, considered by the Extremists to be a powerful weapon in the political struggle, can be used with effect. The following extract from the address of the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Calcutta Congress 1890, contains the fundamental doctrines and object of bourgeois liberal nationalism.

> It is perfectly correct that the ignorant classes whom we seek to represent are still unable to take an active interest in the many social and administrative problems which are now engaging the attention of the educated class; but history teaches us that in all the countries and in all ages, it is the thinking who lead the unthinking, and we are bound to think for ourselves and for those who are still too ignorant to exercise that important function.

Himself a rich lawyer, as well as belonging to the landed aristocracy, the speaker of these words voiced what his class, still in a backward stage of development, understood by a national government based on principles of popular representation. It is the rule of the national bourgeoisie which the Congress fought for; the Moderates as well as the Extremists, the progressive liberals as well as the orthodox religionists, all agree on this political conviction in their nationalism.

The Extremists, who have always based their nationalism on the superiority of India's spiritual civilization, in the field of pure politics prove themselves equally ardent defenders of the material interests of the national bourgeoisie. In supporting the Resolution on Self-Government in the Lucknow Congress of 1916, Tilak, the great advocate of the 'common people', said: 'I would not care if they (rights of self-government) are granted to the lower and lowest classes of the Hindu population, provided that the British Government considers them more fit than the educated classes of India for exercising those rights.' These words contain a challenge to the possible thought that the lower classes are and can be better fitted than the educated classes to exercise the rights and privileges accruing from political autonomy. In answer to a question put to him 'whether the Indian masses would be any less exploited by the native bourgeoisie wielding political state power', Lajpat Rai once told that he would prefer to be kicked by his brother than by a foreigner. And above all, the programme of fostering native industries betrays the bourgeois character even of the orthodox nationalism of the Extremists.

The movement for national liberation is a struggle of the native middle class against the economic and political monopoly of the imperialist bourgeoisie. But the former cannot succeed in the struggle, nor even threaten its opponent to make substantial concessions, without the support of the masses of the people. Because the Indian middle class is still weak numerically, economically and socially, hence the necessity of nationalism in the name of which the people can be led to fight; the victory gained in this fight, however, will not change very much the condition of those whose blood it will cost. The Constitutional Democratic theories of the Moderates are beyond the comprehension of the common people, and therefore cannot be the motive force of Indian nationalism. Their economic programme, which proposes to foster modern industries with native capital by every means, is bound, nevertheless, to revolutionize the position of the toiling masses, and will eventually bring them within the reach of political agitation. But the development of a native capitalist class will at the same time, inevitably intensify the class antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the working masses. When the latter will begin the struggle earnestly, it is expected to be more of a social nature than a political movement for national liberation. Since 1918, the Indian movement has entered this stage. It may still have the appearance of a national struggle involving masses of the population, but fundamentally it is a social strife, the revolt of the exploited against the exploiting class, irrespective of nationality.

The Extremists, now called the Non-cooperators, have had better success than the Moderates in drawing the masses under the influence of Nationalism. But a closer study shows that it is not the demagogic methods nor the religious character attached to the nationalist campaign to which this apparent success is to be attributed. There are deeper economic reasons behind it. It is not by a better understanding of the social problem that the Extremists had succeeded where the Moderates failed. In fact, the reactionary tendency of orthodox extremism makes it blind to these social problems on whose radical solution depends the success of the Indian movement. The discontent and growing unrest among the masses, brought about by economic exploitation intensified during the war, was seized by the Congress under the leadership of the Extremists, and turned into a popular demonstration demanding national liberation. But in spite of their religious idiosyncrasies and orthodox inclinations, the social affiliation of the Extremists is identical with that of the Moderates. In the spontaneous mass-upheavals, they discovered the force which could be utilized for the triumph of the native bourgeoisie. But they could not develop the potentiality of the mass movement by leading it in accordance with its economic urges and social tendencies. Their tactics were to strengthen the nationalist movement by the questionable method of exploiting the ignorance of the masses. And the best way of exploiting the ignorance of the masses was to make a religion of nationalism. These tactics led to the appearance of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi on the political horizon, and the temporary eclipse of all other politico-social tendencies in the shade of Gandhism, which has reached a crisis after having swept the country for two years.

In Gandhism culminates all the social tendencies that have always differentiated the two principles of Indian nationalism. In fact, Gandhism is the acutest and most desperate manifestation of the forces of reaction, trying to hold their own against the objectively revolutionary tendencies contained in the liberal bourgeois nationalism. The impending wane of Gandhism signifies the collapse of the reactionary forces and their total elimination from the political movement.

Ever since its inception, the political movement of modern India has contained two tendencies of diverse character. Progressive politically and revolutionary in social questions, the one has always been evolutionary and compromising in tactics. In spite of its apparently intransigent attitude towards the foreign domination, the other is reactionary socially. Notwithstanding its subjectively reformistic character, the first is and has always been objectively revolutionary because its social basis is the bourgeoisie, and it is conscious of the fact. But this tendency has failed and will always fail to play any outwardly revolutionary role because the conditions for a purely bourgeois revolution do not exist in India. The Indian national movement is not a struggle of the commercial and industrial middle class against decrepit feudalism. The Indian bourgeoisie is not engaged in a class struggle. The basis of the national movement is the rivalry of a weak and suppressed bourgeoisie against its immensely stronger imperialist prototype controlling the state power. To its great misfortune, the Indian middle class was long ago deprived of its historic role of freeing the productive classes from the fetters of feudal bondage. The present fight of the Indian bourgeoisie cannot be, therefore, unrelenting. Its growth and prosperity are not necessarily conditional upon the total destruction of its present enemy. Owing to this relative weakness of its social foundation, nationalism of the progressive tendency headed by the class-conscious bourgeoisie, is bound to be compromising. It is inherently more inimical to the possible revival of social and political reaction than to the British rule which, in spite of itself, promises protection to the advent of capitalist civilization in India. A mass revolt temporarily swayed by the influence of orthodox nationalism, or actuated by the vigorous spirit of class struggle, will be looked upon with equal apprehension by the progressive national democrats, conscious of their economic interests and social affiliation. Because, if the first is the case, it will signify a social and political reaction seriously detrimental to the still weak progressive movement, whereas a revolt of the working class is always very disquieting to the bourgeoisie. Both eventualities are more menacing to the interests of the liberal bourgeoisie than the British government. Therefore, the constitutional democrats, in spite of their revolutionary significance as an objective force, are not only not in a position to stir up and head a mass movement, but are very likely to be driven to the protecting arms of their imperialist peer in the event of such a movement, which is mortally menacing to the bourgeois institutions, so precious, so profitable, so congenial to the peaceful development of the middle class.

Orthodox nationalism, on the other hand, is closer to the understanding of the people, and for this reason succeeds in provoking enthusiasm from time to time; but the reactionary tendencies inherent in it preclude the possibility of its ever becoming a dynamic revolutionary force, which alone is able to shake the foundation of foreign rule and start the people on the road to further progress. The backwardness of the people makes them respond more to religious nationalism than to constitutional democracy. The inevitable incapacity of the progressive bourgeoisie to assume the leadership of the national movement on a mass basis, left the ground at the command of orthodox nationalism which sought to incite the people against the foreign domination in the name of religion and culture. But they also failed, because the masses remained equally passive to the national movement based upon religion. At last the stings of economic exploitation exhausted their patience and religious calm, which owed their baneful origin and durability to the very spiritual national culture they are called upon to defend. It was the narcotic effect of the much-vaunted 'spiritual civilization' which kept the Indian masses apathetic to any movement for material progress. They have been taught to sacrifice the hallucinations of the phenomenal world in expectation of a blissful existence hereafter. The present awakening is a reaction against the age-long resignation, created by religious teachings and the tenets of spiritual culture. Therefore it cannot be used for a national movement tending towards the revival of the spiritual civilization of India. Here lies the contradiction in the orthodox nationalism as expressed of late in the cult of Gandhism. It endeavours to utilize the mass energy for the perpetuation or revival of that heritage of national culture which has been made untenable by the awakening of this energy. The orthodox Extremists in control of the Congress, freed from all Moderate influence, assumed the leadership of a popular mass movement, national in appearance, which contains, nevertheless, a challenge to all the fundamental doctrines of orthodox nationalism. Therefore, the intention of the present Congress, which has acquired the status of a political party, to unite the people of all classes in a struggle for national liberation to be carried on under the banner of Gandhism, is bound to be defeated. The signs of the impending defeat are already perceptible.

Gandhism will fall victim to its own contradictions. By Gandhism is meant the school of nationalism which has been reigning supreme in the Indian movement during the last three years. It can be put in another way: The Indian National Movement, actuated by the spirit of Gandhism cannot succeed, because in that case it would defeat its own end. In spite of the pious desire of its leaders, post-British India cannot and will not become pre-British India. The Indian people will not be able to overthrow foreign domination until and unless all that is cherished by orthodox nationalists have become things of the past, of venerable memory. Sanctimonious antagonism to the 'satanic Western civilization', a tendency which in spite of its pathetic impotency, smacks of reaction, cannot be the life of a movement whose success will be marked by the crowning of the native bourgeoisie, who will prove to be as disruptive as the British ruler in so far as the social and religious ideals of orthodox nationalism are concerned. The victory of Indian nationalism will be the victory of the progressive middle class, which may build a monument to the memory of the Mahatma for the valuable services he rendered them involuntarily, but which will never share his pious indignation against Western civilization, which is after all only a certain stage of social development through which every human community has to pass. This victory will be won, not through 'suffering and soul-force', but with blood and tears and will be maintained by blood and iron. But it must come. The introduction of 'Western civilization, so heartily hated by Gandhi, is the reward of the fierce fight for national independence to which he seeks to lead the people. He is working for something which is mortally antagonistic to the reactionary forces operating through him, and whose standard-bearer he unconsciously is.

Before proceeding to review the happenings in the Indian movement since the beginning of the world war from the point of view stated above, it will be worthwhile to analyse Gandhism, because in it has found ample expression all the ebbing vitality contained in orthodox nationalism. The imminent collapse of Gandhism will close a romantic and exciting chapter of the Indian national movement. It will demonstrate that a socially revolutionary movement cannot be influenced by reactionary forces. It will disclose the incompatibility between the national struggle having for its object the aggrandizement of the bourgeoisie and the revolt of the working masses against class exploitation,—a revolt which nevertheless has contributed strength to the Congress in the last years of its activities.

Although somewhat unique in its idiosyncrasies and fanaticism, the Gandhi cult is not an innovation. Divested of the rebellious spirit and the shrewd politician in him, Tilak would resemble Gandhi in so far as religious beliefs and spiritual prejudices are concerned. But for his versatility in modern thoughts and characteristic looseness of conviction, Bepin Chandra Pal would perchance, join the Mahatma in the passionate denunciation of everything that adds to the material comfort of man. Had he been more of a monomaniac than a profound thinker with metaphysical preoccupations, Arabinda Ghose would subscribe to Gandhi's philosophy, which pretends to command a rushing tide: 'Thus far shalt thou go and no farther.' In the contemporary epoch outside India, Tolstoy has been the apostle of what Gandhi professes. In fact the latter is an avowed disciple of the former. Gandhism is nothing but petty-bourgeois humanitarianism hopelessly bewildered in the clashes of the staggering forces of human progress. The crocodile tears of this humanitarianism are shed ostensibly for the undeniable sufferings of the majority in capitalist society, but they are really caused by grief over the end of the old order, already destroyed or about to be so. It pines for that ancient golden age when the majority were kept in blissful ignorance in order that a few could roll in idle luxury, undisturbed by the revolt of the discontented, the spiritual culture of which was based on the barbarism of the people at large, the simplicity of which was the sign of its backwardness. This longing glance backwards is due, in some cases, to the consummate intrigues of the forces of reaction, and in others, to involuntary subordination to the influence of the same agency. Its tendency towards a sort of religious or utopian socialism proves that Gandhism, as well as its source Tolstoyism, belongs to the latter category. Or in other words, the services rendered by it to reaction are involuntary.

It was in 1908 while still in South Africa that Gandhi formulated his philosophy of 'Non-resistance' and 'Soul-force' in a small book called *Indian Home Rule*. It appears that since then he had not learnt anything nor had he forgotten anything till January 1921, when in the preface to the third edition of his book he confessed:

> It (the book) teaches the gospel of love in the place of that of hate. It replaces violence with self-sacrifice. It pits soul-force against brute force. I withdrew (in this edition) nothing . . . But I would warn the reader against thinking that I am today aiming at the Swaraj described therein. I know that India is not ripe for it . . . I am individually working

> for the self-rule pictured therein. But today my corporate activity is undoubtedly devoted to the attainment of parliamentary Swaraj in accordance with the wishes of the people of India. I am not aiming at destroying railways or hospitals, though I would certainly welcome their natural destruction. Neither railways nor hospitals are a test of a high and pure civilization . . . It requires a higher simplicity and renunciation than the people are today prepared for

This passage make one suspect a wavering in the belief of the author. But the preceding as well as the following paragraphs obviate such possible suspicions. Before declaring that the ideals of his philosophy are practically untenable in these days, Gandhi fortifies himself by the following confession of faith: 'My conviction is deeper today than ever. I feel that if India would discard modern civilization, she can only gain by doing so.' And he reassures himself by declaring: 'If India adopted the doctrine of love as an active part of her religion and introduced it in her politics, Swaraj would descend upon India from heaven.' Gandhi's quarrel is not with the British government, but with 'Western civilization' which is satanic according to his estimation. An Indian government, which would stand for bringing or fostering the same civilization, would be no more acceptable to him. Is there anything more incongruous than this—, that a man with such a philosophy should be at the head of a movement which strives for the establishment of a capitalist society? And is there any doubt whatsoever that Gandhism must discredit itself before long if the movement for national liberation is to go ahead?

Gandhi's criticism of modern civilization, that is, capitalist society, is correct. But the remedy he prescribes is not only wrong but impossible. One need not be a sentimental humanitarian, nor a religious fanatic in order to denounce the present order of society in the countries where capitalism rules. But the knowledge of material and social sciences makes one see through the Christian piety of Gandhism, not only Indian but international (there are Gandhis in every country), and discover the sinister forces of reaction busy in its depths. Its true social character no longer remains unknown on finding such tenets in its philosophy:

> The more we indulge our passions, the more unbridled they become. Our ancestors, therefore, set a limit to our indulgences. They saw that happiness was largely a mental condition. A man is not necessarily happy because he is rich, or unhappy because he is poor. The rich are often seen to be unhappy, the poor to be happy. Millions will always remain poor. Observing all this, our ancestors dissuaded us from luxuries and pleasures.

This sanctimonious philosophy of poverty is not unfamiliar. It has been preached by many prophets who have not only been proved false by history, but the questionableness of their humanitarianism has also been revealed. Such philosophy serves but one object, to guarantee the safety of the vested interests, whose character may differ in different epochs but which essentially is always the same, being based on the right of exploitation of man by man.

Capitalist civilization is rotten; but it cannot be avoided. Neither is it permanent. It must pass away in due course of evolution, giving place to a higher order of society, as the ones preceding it were replaced by it. But it will not collapse because sentimental humanitarians find it full of cruelty and injustice. It will break down under the pressure of its own contradictions. Whether we want it or not, it must be lived through somehow. It must be lived through in order that the fetters of moral and material ignorance that kept the human race bound hitherto can be broken, and mankind in all countries may have the facilities to strive for a higher stage of civilization. National freedom will not enable the people of India to go back, but to surge ahead.

In itself capitalist society has many defects; but it is undoubtedly an improvement on the patriarchal or feudal civilization for which Gandhi and his kind pine. Indian society is inevitably heading towards capitalist civilization, in spite of the premonitions of Gandhi, among many other prophets of similar creed. The desire to see it hark back is as futile as to expect a river to rush back to its source. Caught in the morass of such hopeless contradictions, Gandhism cannot supply the ideology of Indian nationalism. The revolutionary character of the latter is contrary to it. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that Gandhism, better said, the personality of Gandhi, exercised a considerable influence on the Indian movement in the last three years. Or in other words, just about the time that the National Congress was finding the first response among the ranks of the working masses, it came under the domination of a spirit which is essentially reactionary and non-revolutionary in a very frank way. How did it happen? How could a revolutionary movement accept a leadership with antagonistic tendencies? This question leads us to a review of the movement.

The attempts made by the secret revolutionary societies to organize an armed uprising in the first year of the world war were easily thwarted. These organizations could be crushed, or prevented from constituting any serious danger, because they relied more upon conspiracies than upon revolutionary social forces. There was some discontent among the Indian soldiers, which was suffocated if not removed, by severe military measures. The masses of the people remained passive, while the educated lower middle class gloated over German victories and expected a possible defeat of the British, which prospect was conducive to the success of Indian nationalism. But the political parties, without any remarkable exception, protested loyalty to the British government and offered unconditional assistance in the prosecution of the war. Even Tilak,. who had just come out of jail after six years, was not an exception. The congress, under the leadership of the Moderates representing the rich intellectuals and capitalist class, outdid everybody in these protestations of loyalty. But behind this mask of loyalty was to be noticed either an anxious expectation or a spiteful glee on all faces. A whisper ran through the length and breadth of the country that the British power was crumbling. Even in the far-off villages this whisper raised an echo. There was a period of suspense and tension.

In 1915 the military strength of the British Indian government was depleted to the minimum. All the available troops were sent out, and the new recruits, British as well as native, were qualitatively and quantitatively incapable of resisting a possible national upheaval. If there had been a revolutionary national consciousness in the Indian people anywhere outside the small middle class, that was the most opportune moment to strike a blow which would have been mortal in all probability. The loyalty professed to vigorously was false; there was much discontent and disaffection, but it had not yet contaminated the masses. The potentiality of this discontent was reduced to almost nothing when the capitalist class, the backbone of nationalism, unexpectedly found opportunities for industrial development. The monopoly of imperialist capital was made untenable by war conditions; the competition of manufactured goods imported from European countries, including England herself, was removed. Indian industries suddenly entered upon an era of spectacular growth. This economic revolution deprived the political movement of its most powerful social foundation. The intellectual and capitalist middle-class found it profitable to stand by the government. Obstacles to its industrial aspiration removed, the bourgeoisie had no more quarrel with the foreign ruler, at least for the time being. On the contrary, the new era of industrial development needed the protection of an established government. Therefore, the loyalty of the bourgeoisie became real, and the leadership of the Congress sank into such sycophancy that to preside over its session of 1915 was selected a man who combined in his person the landed aristocracy, rich liberal professions and officialdom. He was S. P. Sinha (later on Sir, then Lord, then His Britannic Majesty's Privy-Councillor etc. etc.) on whose head had been showered more blessings of governmental concessions than on any other Indian. He proved himself worthy of the innumerable distinctions received hitherto, and merited more that were to be bestowed subsequently, by uttering in his presidential address such sentiments as these: 'In that critical time it was the duty of India to prove to the great British nation her gratitude for peace and the blessings of civilization secured to her under its aegis for the last hundred and fifty years and more.' These words should not be taken as expressing the sentiments of a slavish individual. They were the voice of the class that he represented.

This remarkable abdication of the Congress betrays the innate weakness of the nationalist forces. That element, which is the most revolutionary from the objective point of view, is liable, nevertheless, to make compromises in every critical moment, by virtue of the fact that its revolutionary energy is not pitted against an enemy which would be unrelentingly hostile to it on the ground of class struggle. Had the Indian bourgeoisie been fighting against a feudal absolutism, no such compromise would be possible; because the two could never be accommodated as is the case in the relation of the former with capitalist imperialism, which will always readjust its method of exploitation in the way of making concessions to its native partner before risking the eventual conflict. This equivocal position of the socially revolutionary factor in the ranks of the nationalist movement makes for the possibility of the latter's falling under the influence of the orthodox school. The reactionary forces behind orthodox nationalism make it subjectively more hostile to British rule. The antagonism between the reactionary tendencies of orthodox nationalism and the modern civilization which the British domination embodies is much more deep-seated and uncompromising than the rivalry between the Indian and British bourgeoisie.

The interests and aspirations of the economically bankrupt lower middle class not being identical with those of the rich intellectuals and capitalist bourgeoisie, the arrangements that give temporary satisfaction to the latter, do not remove the grievances of the former, thus leaving it in a discontented frame of mind which gets worse. When by virtue of their compromising tactics, the Moderates forfeit the leadership of the movement, the lower middle class steps in. The latter's economic position makes it more intransigent, more extremist in its political demands. But the petty-bourgeois social bearing of the Extremists makes them susceptible to the influence of the forces of reaction masquerading in the garb of such cults as spiritual civilization, humanitarianism and the like. On account of its reactionary tendencies, orthodox nationalism, embraced by the discontented petty-bourgeoisie, is more uncompromising in its fight against foreign rule, which is the personification of a social order mortally inimical to its ideals. But doomed to death by the imperious verdict of history, it cannot infuse any vitality in the national movement in spite of its more revolutionary appearance. Nevertheless, its bitter hostility to modern civilization enables it to be more uncompromising to British rule, and therefore to take up the fight and carry it on further than the point at which the Moderates desert it. This was the social reason which explains how the Indian national movement in its most revolutionary period, could be actuated by such a reactionary philosophy as Gandhism.

The second year of the war found the rich intellectual and bourgeois leaders of the national movement reconciled to the British rule and actively supporting it, at a time when it could possibly have been overthrown or at least substantial concessions wrung from its reluctant hand, by threats of withholding assistance to conduct the war. But such measures were altogether unthinkable for the Moderate Party, whose economic interest would be jeopardized more by the unsettled conditions that were most likely to follow a premature overthrow of the British Government than by its continuation, specially when the latter was forced by unexpected circumstances to modify, if not abandon, its former economic policy. The position of the Moderates at that critical moment was very well formulated in the following words of B.L. Mitra, one of their leaders:

> The Moderates consider co-operation with the English necessary for national development, political, industrial, economic and otherwise. The Extremists would straightaway assume full responsibility of government; the Moderates think that would lead to chaos, and would proceed by stages. It is the difference between cataclysm and evolution. The Extremists' ideal is destruction of the existing order of things in the hope that something better will take its place, for nothing can be worse than what is; the Moderates' ideal is for formation of a new order of things on definite progressive lines.

But the very possibility of economic and industrial development which satisfied temporarily the aspirations of the rich bourgeoisie, promised the emergence of another social factor which would be more revolutionary than both the political parties hitherto sharing the leadership of the national movement. The rapid development of large-scale machine industries and the emergency extension of the already existing ones, led to the concentration of the masses of working people in cities with utterly insufficient accommodation for the sudden influx of additional inhabitants. The sudden increase in the number of consumers was very readily taken advantage of by the speculating traders. Consequently prices went up so much, that they exceeded the limits of the miserable wages in the newly-grown capitalist industries. All the effects of a social readjustment resulting from a sudden industrial revolution were felt. Potential causes of a mass revolt were to be expected from such a situation. Increased export caused an acute scarcity of food grains. The burden of forced contribution to the war loans, so liberally subscribed to by the loyal landed aristocracy, who transferred them immediately on to the shoulders of the poor cultivators, prepared the ground for an agrarian revolt. Then, the petty-bourgeoisie and the lower middle class were still smarting under their unredressed grievances; their hopeless economic condition could not be expected to improve in any way by the prospect of a great industrial development or administrative reforms. The surrender of the progressive Moderates left all these revolutionary forces either partially manifest, or still brewing under the surface, without political leadership. The field was clear for orthodox nationalism. Reaction sought to unite all these unconscious forces of revolution in a movement ostensibly anti-British, but really, and according to the confession of the orthodox leaders, to combat the advent of a new order which was denounced as 'satanic' or 'sordid materialism'. All those revolutionary forces directly or indirectly tended towards the destruction of Imperialism, as the rankest manifestation of class domination; reactionary nationalism also desired the overthrow of British rule; but with a different purpose. A common foe made for the alliance of these two most incompatible, nay antagonistic tendencies. And the ignorance of the masses, aided by the lack of social or political conviction of the petty-bourgeoisie, handed the leadership of the movement over to the orthodox Extremists.

The advent of native orthodoxy in the person of Gandhi was preceded by a reaction voluntarily or involuntarily serving the cause of Imperialism. Annie Besant was its apostle. She was seemingly an avowed spiritualist dreading all contamination of things material, but in reality a masked defender of the interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie to which she belonged, in spite of her Irish birth. She had always been a champion of the British Empire, which she chose to call the foundation of a real League of Nations. Her ideal of the League of Nations was evidently the incorporation of the whole world in the British Empire. The same instinct, which, thirty years ago, had induced the liberal imperialist Hume to promote the idea of founding the National Congress, led Mrs Besant to arise from her theosophical esoterics, in which she had immersed herself ever since she came to India, and pollute her holiness with such sordid materialism as politics. Her instinctive zeal for the welfare (not spiritual) of the imperialist bourgeoisie disquieted her at the sight of the ominous clouds gathering on the political horizon. Long residence in the country and intimate relation with the lower middle-class intellectuals, enabled her to gauge the situation cleverly. She set out with the mission of stemming the rising tide of revolution.

Unnoticed by the bourgeois political parties, a new combination of social forces was in the process of consummation. The imminent spontaneous upheaval of the working masses, both in the cities as well as in the countryside, would open up a new vision to the declassed young intellectuals dissipating their revolutionary energy in futile conspiracies. The revolt of the oppressed masses and the ruthless manner in which such a revolt would surely be suppressed by the government with the aid and connivance of the national bourgeoisie, would clarify their social tendencies, thus rescuing them from the vicious circle of orthodox nationalism, and push them forward into the healthy and invigorating atmosphere of an inevitable class struggle against the native as well as the foreign exploiting class. Once launched on such a consciously revolutionary road, the Indian national movement would soon acquire real strength. It would throb with the vitality of mass-action. Neither British oppression, nor the compromising tactics of the bourgeoisie, nor the questionable orthodoxy of the reactionary religionists would be able to check or distort the victorious march of such a movement.

This was a gloomy prospect for imperial domination as well as for that of which the native bourgeoisie was dreaming in the name of national independence. How could such a fatal eventuality be averted? An outburst of orthodox nationalism tickling the spiritual imperialism of the young revolutionaries, supplemented by a show of extremism in political demands, might be expected to save the situation. Mrs Besant captured the imagination and admiration of the revolutionarily-inclined young intellectuals by preaching with her wonted eloquence, the familiar gospel of the spiritual superiority of Indian over Western culture, and condemning the British government as the worst manifestation of Western materialism from which, she exclaimed, the innocent children of sacred India must be saved. Thus a wrong channel was opened for the great revolutionary wave that was raising its majestic crest on the offing of the society. Essentially a socio-economic struggle, the impending movement must assume a political manifestation with considerable latitude for nationalist preoccupations. The astuteness of Mrs Besant caught on to the familiar, but harmless, political slogan of 'Home Rule' which swung the Extremists on her side, because it promised to lead the movement abandoned by the Moderates. In consequence, those who might have sought the destruction of British domination with the aid of revolutionary mass-action, committed themselves to the ambiguous programme of self-government within the British Empire. Mrs Besant rendered a valuable service to the imperial cause so dear to her, although the bureaucratic government did not seem to appreciate her merits and made a pseudo-martyr of her.

The prospect of a mass-upheaval completely drove the progressive bourgeoisie into the protecting arms of its imperialist peer, but inspired the orthodox Extremists, who stepped into the control of the movement. Under their leadership it assumed a politically aggressive character, but its social significance was confused for the time being. Mrs Besant could not prevent the inevitable; she only prepared the ground for Gandhi, whose advent pushed her into well-merited disgrace. Both preached the doctrine of orthodox nationalism, but the difference lay in the respective objects in view. The former desired to save the Indians from modern materialism in order to ensure the continuance of British domination, while the latter's hostility to Western civilization was fomented by the apprehension that it would strike at the root of the religious, intellectual and patriarchal vested interests which, in the name of spiritual culture, held the Indian masses in moral as well as material bondage.

In 1916 the National Congress entered upon a new chapter of its history. From that year it ceased to be the loosely organized deliberative body that it had been so far, and assumed the character of a cohesive political party, a fighting organ. The political programme of the Extremists was completely adopted, though the Moderates still participated in the Congress, and one of the most mediocre from their midst was chosen to preside over the session of 1916 held in Lucknow. The embarrassing position of the imperial power, together with the first indications of a popular awakening, encouraged the Congress. It decided to demand an adequate price for the support which the Indian bourgeoisie was willing to render the British government. The latter had already shown an inclination to make concessions by placing with the native factories large orders for war materials, by encouraging war production in industrial plants owned by native capital, and lastly by appointing a commission to investigate the possibilities of modern industries in India and devise ways and means of fostering them by native capital. Something more significant happened to show that the British government was serious in its new policy of compromise. Just before his extended term of office was over in the middle of 1916, the then viceroy Lord Hardinge was known to be engaged in drafting a scheme of reforms which would cater liberally to the ambitions of the bourgeoisie, as represented by the Moderates. Then, the talk of a radical reconstruction in imperial relations after the war reached the ears of the Indian bourgeoisie. The British Premier Asquith's promise that in consideration of her war services India would be looked at from 'a new angle of vision' was interpreted as the offer of dominion status with a government responsible to the Indian people. All these factors contributed to the crystallization of such a feeling that the Lucknow Congress (1916) swayed clear to the left. It was dominated by the Extremists' outlook in spite of its Moderate president..

It was not only the Congress dominated by Extremist politicians that reflected the vigour felt by the bourgeoisie. It was manifested in another and quite unexpected way. Before the Congress met, the elected members of the Legislative Council, which owed its existence to the Morley Reforms of 1909, presented a memorandum to the government demanding an immediate readjustment in the state administration. The repeal of the Arms Act and the organization of an Indian volunteer corps were very energetically pressed. The necessity of mending the autocratic character of the British Indian government and of transferring some of its power to the elected representatives of the people was emphatically urged. The memorandum expressed the point of view of that section of the bourgeoisie already in alliance with the government, which raised its voice to say that if the government desired to be assured of its valuable services, it must show an inclination to pay a reasonable price. Still looking up to the British government as an indispensable protection, the bourgeoisie was encouraged to assume such an aggressive attitude not only through its growing economic importance, but mainly because of the awakening mass-energy, which could be utilized for backing up the demands made. Constitutional agitation was replaced by the hagglings of a bargainer. The mass awakening was not yet a conscious movement. But the politically minded middle class felt the impulse of strength proceeding from the knowledge that the people woud follow its lead. The bourgeoisie's claim to national leadership was at last materializing.

What had been formulated as the ultimate goal of the Congress in 1906 was categorically demanded in 1916. In return for the Indian people's support of the war, immediate self-government (Dominion Status) and complete fiscal autonomy were asked for. Both the wings of the Congress, the Moderates as well as the Extremists, subscribed to this demand. It fell to the lot of Surendra Nath Banerji, the Moderate veteran and one of the founders of the Congress, to move the resolution on self-government. The president in course of his speech formulated the demand as follows:

> India must cease to be a dependency and be raised to the status of a self-governing state, as an equal partner with equal rights and responsibilities, as an independent unit of the empire.

He declared that a 'bloodless revolution' was already in progress, and a resolution was passed requesting that 'the King Emperor should issue a proclamation announcing that it is the aim and intention of the British policy to confer self-government on India at an early date.'

Another epoch-making feature of the Lucknow Congress was the unconditional endorsement of its programme and demands by the All-

India Muslim League simultaneously in session in the same city. This rapprochement of the two great rivals, if not antagonistic communities, culminated in the so-called Congress-League Scheme formulated and issued as the programme of the Indian National Movement in August 1917. Self-government within the British Empire with complete fiscal autonomy was the slogan, and the Congress in which its sister Moslem organization was incorporated, entered the period of an active political fight.

At this point it is necessary to make a retrospective study in order that the full significance of this rapprochement may be well understood. Except for one or two solitary figures, the founders of the National Congress were all non-Moslems. Orthodox nationalism was based upon aggressive Hinduism. The Extremist Party was born and developed as a Hindu Party. It was actuated by Hindu religion; its ideology was derived from Hindu philosophy. The ruling power of the land till but a relatively short time ago, the Mussalmans, at least the upper class with the blood of the conquering race, did not consider themselves the same as the Hindu population. With their fierce fanaticism, they could not be expected to feel themselves an integral part of the Indian people, welded together by religious consciousness and cultural traditions. Then, on account of a higher grade of social development, the Hindu intellectuals responded more readily to those progressive political and social thoughts which made for the birth of modern nationalism and the eventual foundation of the Congress. When the Western educated Hindu intellectuals began the agitation for representative government, the Mussalmans would not have anything to do with them. The latter looked upon the former with suspicion. The Hindus were in the majority in the bulk of the population as well as in the intellectual and propertied middle class.† A government based upon the principles of national representation threatened to be a Hindu supremacy. Naturally the Mussalmans were not very enthusiastic over a movement fraught with such possibilities. In fact, the landed aristocracy and the comparatively few intellectuals among them were decidedly hostile to such a movement. This attitude of theirs gave the foreign ruler the opportunity of using the large Islamic community as an opposition to the nationalism of the Congress. And the imperialist government did use this weapon very cleverly and not without effect. But the blame for this lack of unity among the Hindus and Moslems is not to be laid entirely at the doors of the government, whose 'divide and rule' policy could not have succeeded had there not been conflicting interests between the two communities. As soon as both communities came to have identical material interests, their union in a political movement could no longer be prevented by the cleverest artifices of the government, nor by the traditional religious antagonism.

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†According to the census of 1921, there are 70,000,000 Mohamedans out of a total population of 319,000,000.

The masses of both the communities were equally indifferent to questions political. They lived for centuries side by side in the same villages, engaged in the same occupation of toiling for the maintenance of an extravagantly luxurious ruling class.

Religious antagonisms, which undoubtedly did exist, could not however interfere with the unavoidable phenomenon that the society was divided into two classes, the exploited lower class and the exploiting upper class. People professing antagonistic religions were to be found in the ranks of both classes. For convenience of exploitation, religious antagonism was kept alive among the people by the upper class of both the communities. Fanaticism fed upon ignorance made such strategy possible. But the relation between the rich propertied classes of the two communities could not be harmonious, either under the Mohamedan rule, nor afterwards. It was marked by bitter rivalry. The trading middle class flourishing in the latter days of the Moslem empire was predominantly Hindu, while the ruling Islamic community remained in the backward social stage of feudalism. The British conquest found the Moslem population generally divided into feudal landlords and peasantry. In accordance with the policy of British imperialism in its earlier days, the feudal rulers as well as the landed aristocracy were crushed politically and militarily to a state of impotency—to be preserved, petted and pampered later on. This being the case, the social basis for a liberal intelligentsia was absent in the Moslem community at the time of the British conquest, and it was long before such a social factor could come into being during the British period.

When the Hindu liberal intellectuals organized the National Congress, the few modern educated Mohamedans that existed in the country belonged exclusively to the landed aristocracy of feudal descent. By class affiliation, these were not prone to progressive ideas, either political or social. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, an aristocratic intellectual, did the pioneer work in starting (1875) the Aligarh College, with the intention of bringing modern education within the reach of youths without tampering with the religious prejudices and susceptibilities of his reactionary community. Unlike the Hindu middle class, the Moslems were still in a stage of social development which was not conducive to the introduction of secular education. The separation of education from religion was looked upon with great apprehension and was universally opposed. Despite his progressive tendencies, Syed Ahmed Khan had to bow down before the forces of reaction still rampant in the Moslem community and compromise on an adjustment of modern secular education with theological teaching in the Aligarh College. He sought to get as many young men as possible educated in modern ways compatible with the tenets of Islam, which, reflecting the tendencies of his community, he held to be indispensable for and more conducive to the welfare of Moslem society than Western civilization. Nevertheless, he looked upon British rule as a providential contact—and implicit loyalty to it was the theme of all his educational and public activities. Under his zealous patronage, Aligarh came to be the Eton of Moslem India. The intellectual centre of the rich aristocracy, its concession to modern education amply counter-balanced by a good dose of theological training, Aligarh naturally failed to produce youthful elements holding social and political ideas similar to the Hindu intellectuals who conceived of a political nationalism as expressed in the organization of the National Congress. While the earlier generation of the Hindu modern intelligentsia became 'de-nationalized', or in other words, were capable of imbibing fully progressive social and political thoughts, the products of Aligarh were staunch Mussalmans above all, and implicit in their loyalty to the British government. This loyalty however, did not speak for any special characteristic of the Moslem community. It was a natural and inevitable outcome of the social position the Moslems occupied in those days. Besides it was provoked by instinctive rivalry and suspicion against a movement whose success, even partial, would mean a Hindu supremacy in Indian politics. And in those days, to the Moslem upper class of feudal origin, Hindu domination was by no means a better prospect than British rule, which was always willing to show them favouritism. The absence of a class-cohesion was responsible for the political divergence between the Hindus and Moslems. Those of the former, who inaugurated the agitation for representative government and social reforms, were intellectual bourgeoisie, whereas the Aligarh alumni, on whom were showered the good graces of the British government, belonged to the landed aristocracy with social and political tendencies predominantly feudal. Elements so diverse socially could not unite in a national movement. The foreign ruler was not slow in finding this social divergence and communal rivalry, and made full use of them.

The Moslem intellectuals remained loyal to British rule because feudal class affiliation rendered them unresponsive to the progressive political thoughts embraced and propagated by their Hindu contemporaries. Theirs was not loyalty to British rule as such, but loyalty to a particular social order they were zealous to preserve. If they were hostile to the Congress, it was not for its alleged 'seditious' character, but because it represented a tendency inimical to the social, political and religious institutions and traditions cherished as ideal by them. Their support and sympathy for British rule were not purchased, as is generally believed, by petty favouritism, but originated in the belief that British rule would provide a protection for the social order and religious institutions they desired to preserve, and which, they apprehended, would be endangered if the Hindu liberals were to be given their way. This apprehension was corroborated by the growth of orthodox nationalism, which was bigotedly Hindu in character and therefore could not be expected to be looked upon with equanimity by the Moslems. It was not governmental favouritism, but class affiliation that first kept the Moslem intellectuals away from the Congress, and subsequently arrayed against it the forces of their community. The Moslems could not take part in the national movement until there should arise in their midst a modern bourgeoisie divorced from all feudal connection, whose economic vision would not be limited to land-owning, but extended to commercial and industrial horizons.

Till the earlier years of the twentieth century, politically, the Moslem intellectuals were less concerned with Indian affairs than with Pan-Islamism, which embodied the dream of a federation of the Mussalman states; a sort of a romantic imperialism sanctified by religious authority. In this politico-religious movement, no force making for the growth of nationalism among the Indian Moslems was to be found. In fact, it was an impediment to the development of national consciousness. The Moslem intellectuals of modern India awoke, not to nationalism, but to the dream of an extra-national existence whose realization, however, had been made impossible by various other factors outside India and beyond their control and comprehension. When the politically independent or semi-independent Moslem states like Persia and Turkey felt the call of nationalism as expressed in the revolutions of 1907 and 1908, the impracticability and illusiveness of Pan-Islamism became apparent. The religious solidarity of the Moslem world also proved to be little more than a pleasant myth, due to the silence and passivity with which the declaration of Jehad by the Khalifa during the Tripolitan and Balkan Wars was received by the faithful. On the other hand, the attitude of England during the Balkan war led the Indian Moslems to suspect the sincerity of the British patronage they had hitherto believed in.

This double disillusionment made the Moslem intellectuals of India turn towards home politics. They could no longer remain satisfied with the fond dream of Pan-Islamism, which failed to stand the test of experiment in a political as well as a religious sense; no could they any longer entrust the interests of their community entirely to the questionable patronage of the British. Pan-Islamism has been smiled upon by the British government so long as it remained a fashionable cult, harmless politically. It was a diversion for the young intellectuals who otherwise might run into mischief, in imitation of their Hindu contemporaries. But in the years following the Turkish revolution Pan-Islamism, under the spiritual leadership of the Committee of Union and Progress (Young Turk Party), took on the character of incipient imperialism. Therefore the condescending smile with which the British Indian government had regarded the Pan-Islamism of Sultan Abdul Hamid, turned into a frown when it was converted into the Pan-Turanism of the Young Turks. The spread of Pan-Islamism of the new denomination threatened to be an anti-British movement, and could not be tolerated among the Indian Moslems. This led to a disruption of the relation hitherto subsisting between the Moslem middle class of India and the British government. But mere anti-British sentiment could not make the Moslems consider themselves as part of the Indian nation, predominated by Hindu ideology and traditions.

It was a factor of an entirely different nature which contributed to the tendency towards political nationalism in the Moslem community. This was the mercantile and industrial class, which developed quite independent of the religious unity of the Moslem world. Its interest in Pan-Islamism, where it existed, was purely that for a fashionable cult, without any vital attachment. It was the political situation of India and the economic policy of the British government which had a vital bearing upon its own development. The anti-British feelings created by events outside India, and spreading among the new generation of Moslem intellectuals did not affect the Moslem capitalist class, which looked upon British patronage as a necessary factor for its development. By the first years of the twentieth century had come into existence a small number of young intellectuals, the ideological pioneers of the Moslem bourgeoisie, who stood for nationalism in which religious and sectarian disputes should be submerged. But the first political expression of the Moslem community was rather anti-nationalistic than national. It was the organization of the All-India Muslim League in which took part members of the loyal, intelectual, landed aristocracy and some of the mercantile and industrial class. In fact, the League was organized under the benign auspices of the British government, which wanted to make of it a Moslem opposition to Hindu nationalism. Under the leadership of the religious aristocrat Aga Khan and the official reactionary Ameer Ali, the League proved to be a willing instrument for the insidious designs of the British government. It emphatically protested 'loyalty' as against the 'seditious' attitude of the Hindu Congress, whose claim to national representation was challenged by the very organization of the

League which pretended to voice the sentiment of the sixty-seven million Mohamedans.

Apart from being a bulwark against Hindu nationalism, the League served another purpose of the imperialist government. It raised an opposition against the spread of Pan-Islamism in India. Already in the later nineties, Syed Ahmed Khan, as leader of the liberal Moslems of India, had repudiated the title of the Turkish Sultan to the Khalifat. For this act the Moslem had on his side the traditional authority of the Moslem emperors of Delhi, who never recognized the Turkish Sultan as their Lord Temporal and Spiritual. The founder and first leader of the League, Aga Khan himself claimed direct descent from the Prophet in his capacity as the spiritual head of the Khoja dissenters.

But the pronounced political significance of the Muslim League, under its founders and old leaders, was the opposition to the National Congress, the realization of whose programme of representative government would be tantamount to Hindu rule. The League came into existence on the very eve of the Extremist triumph over the Congress. Orthodox nationalism with its pronounced religious ideology could not but arouse apprehension among the Mussalmans. Therefore, the need of British protection was doubly felt by the latter. The Partition of Bengal, while a great butt of attack on the government from the nationalists of all shades of opinion, received the approval of the newly-born Muslim League, because one of the objects of the partition was to create a large province with an overwhelming Moslem majority in the population. It was in this new province that the Hindu nationalism of the Extremists was very rampant, and the government did succeed in setting the religious fanaticism of the ignorant Moslem majority against it with disastrous results. The atrocities committed on the Hindu minority by the infuriated Moslem mob egged on by the police, seriously harmed the possibility of a national unity embracing the people at large. In spite of all these lamentable consequences of the Partition, the Muslim League went so far as to warn the government, when it was considering its repeal, not to make hasty concessions which would make for a Hindu supremacy. It was in deference to the point of view put forth by the League that the Indian Councils Act of 1909, which was followed two years later by the repeal of the Partition, was based on the principle of community representation, thus guaranteeing the Moslem minority a privileged position as a remuneration for its loyalty.

But events outside India weakened the faith of the Moslem intellectuals in the goodwill of the British government, notwithstanding the loyalism of the League and the reciprocal favouritism of the government. Not a few of the young Moslem intellectuals joined the nationalist movement, and began to participate in the Congress. A middle class had come into existence in the Moslem community. It grew out of the poorer strata of the landed aristocracy and the commercial community. The modern educated youths of this class were violently anti-British on account of the ripples of Pan-Turanism reaching India. Therefore, they swelled the ranks of the Extremists in spite of their religious diversity. The news of the Turkish revolution stirred up the imagination of these young enthusiasts, who sought connection with the Committee of Union and Progress, whose leaders were held as the saviours of the Moslem world. The loyalist policy of the Muslim League was assailed by these young intellectuals who could be called revolutionary, considering their anti-British sentiment. But they were far from nationalism as yet. They were willing to join hands with the Hindu Extremists in order to destroy British imperialism, not for the national liberation of the Indian people, but because they considered the British to be the mortal enemies of Islam. It was the spirit of Pan-Islamism which had an acute outburst in consequence of the triumph of the Young Turks, who aspired to launch on an imperialist venture in the name of Islam, with the questionable friendship of the Pan-Germans. This wave of Pan-Turanism in India did not go beyond the walls of the modern Madrassas whose number was very small, but a few members of the thin lower middle class were also agitated by it. The rich upper class remained unshaken in its loyalty, while the Moslem masses were electrified by it as much as the Hindus were by orthodox nationalism.

Nevertheless, the overthrow of reactionary loyalists like Aga Khan and Ameer Ali from the leadership of the League brought the political movement of the Moslems closer to the Congress. The new leaders of the League were mostly young middle-class intellectuals, and therefore susceptible to nationalism. Even before capturing the leadership, they had criticized the League's advocacy of community representation as detrimental to national solidarity. The gradual subordination of religious orthodoxy to the political radicalism of the Extremists, on the other hand, removed another cause which might have kept, and to some extent did keep, the Mussalman intellectuals away from the Congress. The growth of a capitalist bourgeoisie, socially distinguished from the aristocratic scions of the reactionary feudal landlords, made the conception of nationalism possible among the Indian Moslems. This nationalism was distinct from a politico-religious movement on behalf of an imaginary world-federation of Islamic states; it was the nationalism of an integral part of the Indian people. Reactionary Moslem landlords could be the object of governmental favouritism as against progressive Hindu intellectuals; but the interests of Mussalman capitalists were as hostile as those of the

Hindus to imperialist exploitation. This being the essence of the situation, the years preceding the great World-War were marked by a steady closing of the ranks of the bourgeoisie, Hindu as well as Moslem, in the movement of political nationalism. In 1916, it was under the presidency of a rich merchant that the Muslim League made common cause with the Congress, which thus became the political organ of the national bourgeoisie, undivided by religious or sectional interests.

The firm attitude of the Congress, especially the Congress-League Scheme, commanded the attention of the government, which promptly showed indications of introducing such reforms as would placate the native capitalist class, till then the driving force behind the increasing vigour of the Congress. The first practical measure by way of these promised concessions was the increased rate of customs duty imposed on the manufactured cotton imported into India. This touched a vital spot by conceding a partial protection, so persistently sought for, to the principal and most prosperous Indian industry. It appeared to have had the desired effect. The Indian bourgeoisie did not hesitate to pay the price demanded for this concession. A War Fund of £ 100,000,000 to be sent as a gift to England, was readily contributed. This partial protection was held by the Indian bourgeoisie as an earnest of further concessions that were to come, as the herald of the radical revision of the entire fiscal relation of the different parts of the Empire after the war, as promised by the government.

The schism between the two wings of the nationalist camp could no longer be averted, when the following declaration was simultaneously made by Montagu in the House of Commons and by the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, in Simla:

> The policy of the British government henceforth was declared to be not only the increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration, but also the greatest development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.

This declaration complied with almost all the demands of the Moderates. For all those who happened to be free from distrust of the imperialistic policy, it was indeed a liberal promise. The Moderate Party, that is, the rich intellectuals and big capitalists, hailed this declaration as the advent of a new era. They obviously did not believe that the imperialist government would, without a struggle, concede to India that amount of self-government which would practically make her lost to the empire. But they considered it a mistake to press any further at that point. According to their estimation, enough had been secured, and it was advisable to consolidate the new acquisition and prepare for a further advance in due course of time. Gandhi himself, still out of politics and engaged in humanitarian activities, in the beginning of 1915 defined Swaraj as partnership in the British Empire, and prescribed that the way to the realization of Swaraj was by services rendered for the successful prosecution of the war. At the outbreak of the war he had offered his services in an Indian Volunteer Ambulance Corps, like the one he had organized and led, to the great appreciation of the high command during the Boer war.

The British government, however, felt that the situation in India was much more serious than in 1908–9, in spite of the apparent loyalty of the bourgeoisie during the war and its grateful acceptance of the new reforms. Potential social factors, which did not exist before, had come into operation, and were beginning to make their influence felt on the nationalist movement. Imperial shrewdness did not fail to foresee that the wave of popular revolt following the cataclysm of the World War could not leave India entirely unaffected. A mass upheaval would add dynamic strength to the nationalist movement. Therefore, it was found necessary to convince a powerful social class that it had a stake in the existing government. The Moderates could not be rallied by the government with so little as was found sufficient by the liberal Morley in 1909. The rich bourgeoisie must be made to understand that their further development would no longer be obstructed by the British, in order that, for the continued maintenance of law and order as against the threatening popular disturbances, their unconditional support could be counted upon. With a safe road to progressive development open before it, the rich bourgeoisie would certainly throw its weight against a movement mainly destructive in character. The instinct to preserve vested interests, economic as well as political, would make rich liberal and propertied bourgeoisie together with the landed aristocracy, opposed to all popular upheavals threatening the subversion of the established order in favour of something uncertain, which could be either too reactionary or too radical. Neither eventuality was welcome.

These considerations determined the policy of the British government in the latter part of the war and also in the post-bellum years. The declaration made by the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy in August, 1917 contained the following statement: 'That substantial steps should be taken in this direction (of introducing self-governing institutions) as soon as possible, and that it is of highest importance that there should be free and informal exchange of opinion between those in authority at home and India.' The latter purpose took Montagu to India towards the end of the year. But dominated by the political extremism of the orthodox nationalists, the Congress in December 1917, reaffirmed the resolutions of the previous year and declared that nothing less than Home Rule would be acceptable. Here triumphed the spirit of Mrs Besant who presided over the Congress of 1917. By introducing the slogan of Home Rule she saved India for the Empire; left alone, the Extremists, who controlled the Congress completely, might have repudiated the imperial connection, because the awakening mass energy had fired their imagination. The reactionary nationalism preached by Mrs Besant and subsequently taken up by Gandhi, was not compatible with that form of political state which would be the corollary to Home Rule. But Mrs Besant's reactionary designs concerned the political and not social aspect of the Indian movement. The reactionary tendencies contained in the orthodox nationalism of the followers of Tilak and the Gandhites are social; therefore they would not brook any compromise with the political institution which would render them untenable. They would demand complete separation from the British Empire with the desire to save India from the unholy contamination of the sordid materialism of Western civilzation, if they dared.

The publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme forced a clear split in the ranks of the nationalists. The majority of the Moderates, though not fully satisfied by the reforms promised, accepted them as a big step forward, while the Extremists declared them to be utterly inadequate and rejected them summarily. The Moderates read a promising future in such passages in the Report on which the suggested reforms were based: 'We must remember too that the educated Indian has come to the front by hard work; he has seized the education which we offered him because he first saw its advantages; and it is he who has advocated and worked for political progress. All this stands to his credit. For thirty years he has developed in his Congress, and latterly in the Muslim League, free popular convocations which express his ideals. We owe him sympathy because he has conceived and pursued the idea of managing his own affairs, an aim which no Englishman can fail to respect.' These patronizing words tickled the vanity of the rich intellectuals, to whom they meant a recognition of their own importance by the British government. They also concluded from these phrases that their political point of view had been accepted by the government; the logical consequence of which acceptance was a matter of elation to them. They looked forward to the advancement of the interest of their class under the protection and sanction of the British government.

The bourgeoisie was further reassured of the prospect of its aggrandizement by the following statement contained in the Report: 'We cannot stay their (of the intelligentsia) progress entirely until education has been extended to the masses . . . We have not succeeded in making education practical. It is only now, when the war has revealed the importance of industry, that we have deliberately set about encouraging Indians to undertake the creation of wealth by industrial enterprise, and thereby have offered the educated classes any tangible inducement to overcome their traditional inclination to look down upon practical forms of energy.' The aspirations of the capitalists and liberal intellectuals on their way to be realized even if but partially, the Moderates gave up their opposition to the government. They condemned the uncompromising attitude of the Extremists as imprudent and detrimental to the constructive progress of the Indian nation. The Congress of 1918 was totally deserted by the Moderates. Gandhi himself, who as a member of the Government Commission appointed for making inquiries in connection with the agrarian troubles in Champaran, had glimpsed the volcano of discontent seething under the hitherto unruffled surface of the society, expressed a favourable opinion about the Reforms.

But the government was smelling trouble in the air. The first indications of an imminent mass upheaval were to be noticed in the general restiveness all over the country. It was neither from the compromising rich bourgeoisie, nor from the objectively impotent but apparently aggressive orthodox nationalism of the lower middle-class intellectuals involuntarily under the influence of the forces of reaction, that the gravest danger was to be expected. Placating the Moderates did not put an end to the possibility of troubles from other quarters. Prolonged economic exploitation intensified during the war, had exhausted the traditional patience of the people, large masses of whom had been herded into the new industrial centres, where they found themselves in conditions worse than before.

In the beginning of the war, several thousand workers came back from the United States of America where they had emigrated. These emigrants had experienced a higher standard of living in America; they had seen that the ordinary comforts available for the workingmen in other countries were luxuries in comparison with the miserable condition of the Indian toiler, urban as well as rural. Besides, while in America they had received political ideas of a revolutionary trend. They all came back with the intention of overthrowing the British domination. In this they had failed, since the conspiracies of the secret revolutionary organizations were frustrated in the earlier part of the war. But these returned emigrants did more revolutionary service than to take part in an abortive insurrection. Originally they all belonged to the poor peasantry of the north, especially the

Punjab. The attempt to organize insurrections being frustrated, these returned emigrants all went straight into their villages with their new vision and experiences acquired in foreign countries. It was not long before their spirit was caught by the people they came in contact with. There was another factor which rendered similar services in awakening the mass energy. More than a million Indian soldiers were sent out to different fronts where they fought side by side with Europeans. In the towns and villages of Europe they found even the poorest people living in a condition better than theirs at home. These soldiers were also coming back changed men. The imminent demobilization would scatter these discontented and disturbing elements broadcast all over the country.

These were the potential sources of the impending danger. Discontent was no longer confined within the small middle class; it had penetrated the villages, it had rudely shaken the resignation of the masses of Indian people. This situation had not been created by the agitation of the bourgeois democrats, nor by the aggressive nationalism of the religious orthodox. It was brought about by the development of objective forces. Therefore it could not be handled successfully merely by placating the Moderates and persecuting the Extremists. At last there was the menace of a huge popular upheaval, caused essentially by economic exploitation not alone by imperial capital, but by native agencies as well. The imminent popular upheaval was a social outburst, the rise of a socially revolutionary force uncompromising, unrelenting, implacable, which would mark the commencement of the inevitable class war.

Success in 'rallying the Moderates' did not insure the situation in face of this threatening mass-revolt, which would add immense strength to the Extremists. In fact the latter could take such a firm stand on their political demands only because encouraged, though unconsciously, by the strength that would accrue to the nationalist movement as a result of a mass upheaval. The religious ideology of the orthodox Extremists was capable of influencing the zeal of the ignorant masses in the first phases of their struggle. The result would be an immense strengthening of the national movement, under the leadership of the Extremist Party. Mass-revolt provoked by a still confused class antagonism, could be easily diverted into the channel of anti-British sentiment. The National Congress threatened to become a really powerful body, in spite of the defection of its founders.

Consequently, the government launched upon a dual policy; it tried to combat the Indian movement with a double-edged sword. It adopted the policy of conciliation and concession on the one hand, and brutal repression on the other. The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms typified the former, while the latter was ominously heralded by the introduction of the Rowlatt Bill in the Legislature. The apprehension of a great popular outburst, which induced the government to pass emergency legislation putting the country practically under Martial law, was manifest in the following words uttered by the Viceroy in defending the Rowlatt Bill in the Legislative Council. He sounded the alarm saying: 'The reaction against all authority that has manifested itself in many parts of the civilized world is unlikely to leave India entirely untouched and the powers of evil are still abroad.' The powers which the Viceroy had in mind were eventually discovered outside the camp of the Extremists, whose following was still confined to a small section of the lower middle class. The alarm was sounded in the beginning of 1919. The echoes of the Russian Revolution had been for some time reverberating upon the horizon of India; the news of the great upheaval of the European working class as expressed in the German, Hungarian and Bavarian revolutions was not altogether unknown; serious troubles were brewing among the toiling masses of Japan. There was indeed ample reason for the British government to be anxious about its position and to take precautions. The Rowlatt Bill was enacted in the face of unanimous opposition from all shades of nationalist opinion. Even the elected Indian members of the Legislative Council voted en block against it.

The agitation against the Rowlatt Bill brought Gandhi prominently into the political field. So far he had kept himself practically aloof from any noteworthy political activities. Gandhi had seen active demonstration of mass action in South Africa, where he had led the struggle of the Indian emigrants. His recent works in connection with the agrarian revolts in Champaran had also given him a good idea of mass psychology. All his accumulated experience was brought to bear upon the mass energy on the eve of an outburst in India. While the political leaders, Moderates and Extremists alike, were agitating against the projected coercive measures, there appeared on the scene the magnetic personality of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, an ardent apostle of religious nationalism and a bitter opponent of what he called the 'Satanic Western Civilization' which was being feverishly introduced into India in the form of large capitalist industries. By inaugurating the campaign of Satyagraha (passive resistance to evil), an active vent was given to the Opposition, which could thus transcend the limits of mere indignation-meetings and passing resolutions of protest. Devoid of any other weapons to fight the British government, the Indian people were provided in the campaign of passive resistance with a way of making their energy felt by the opponent. Gandhi postulated that the Indian people would 'refuse to obey these laws and such other laws', but would at the same time 'faithfully follow the truth and refrain from violence to life, person and property'.

With this vow a committee was organized, which replied to the enactment of the Rowlatt Bill by calling a Hartal (national strike). Everybody should cease work; all shops should be closed; all business should be suspended.

For the first time in its history, the Indian national movement entered into the period of active struggle, and in doing so it had to call upon the masses of the people. A national strike cannot be carried on with any effect by the lower middle class, which too is very small in India. The time for mass-action was ripe. Economic forces, together with other objective causes had created an atmosphere in which a spontaneous response could be expected to a call for a national strike. Had this step been taken several years earlier, there would have been hardly any response. Gandhi did not think of backing up the Congress-League demands of 1916 by a Hartal, not even by a big demonstration. Great ideas originate and are determined by the prevailing material conditions. In 1919 the state of affairs was such that the idea of a national strike could be conceived. A considerable portion of the population was in an inflammable state of mind. There had been various strikes in the industrial centres. The call for a Hartal was enthusiastically responded to by the working class. It was a great mass upheaval, an essentially socio-economic, and not a mere national demonstration, that led up to the Punjab massacres culminating in Amritsar. The powder magazine was there; Gandhi set fire to it.

This mighty mass revolt scared the Moderates into the shelter of their spiritual home, under the throne of the Imperial bourgeoisie. They were not slow in issuing a manifesto condemning the Hartal which, apparently a demonstration against the government, was essentially a great social upheaval—the prelude to the coming class struggle. Gandhi himself appeared to have surmised instinctively the dangerous character to be eventually assumed by the mighty forces he was instrumental in invoking. Therefore, from the very beginning he firmly took his stand on the ground that 'truth' should be followed by 'refraining from violence to property'. This strong instinct of preserving property rights above all betrays the class affiliation of Gandhi in spite of his pious outbursts against the sordid materialism of modern civilization. His hostility to capitalist society is manifestly not revolutionary, but reactionary. He believes in the sanctity of private property, but seeks to prevent its inevitable evolution to capitalism. In the years following the Industrial Revolution, Great Britain was swept by a wave of anti-machine philosophy; but it was a revolutionary movement, because the attack against private property was its feature. A radical cure of that civilization so heartily hated by Gandhi, can be effected, not by returning to a backward stage of society based upon private property, but by eliminating property rights root and branch. And before being altogether eliminated, private property must go through successive stages of evolution, the highest being capitalism. Gandhi took his stand on dangerous ground. He embodies simultaneously Revolution and Reaction; he must perish in the fierce clash.

Before spreading to the Punjab, the strike was most successful in the industrial districts of the province of Bombay. Several hundred thousand workers in the textile factories mostly owned and managed by native capitalists, not a few of whom were Congressmen, were in a state of open revolt, which could be put down only by the free use of machine guns and bombing planes. It was clearly demonstrated that the military machine of the state would always protect the propertied bourgeoisie against any riotous action of the ignorant mob. Gandhi himself confessed that he had under-estimated the 'forces of evil' he helped let loose upon the respectable bourgeois order of society. Therefore, while in those stirring days of 1919, there were about fifty thousand textile workers on strike in Ahmedabad, and the railway workers were holding up the traffic in order to prevent the rushing of troops to supress the Punjab revolts by wholesale massacre and terrorism, Gandhi could be found 'co-operating' with the 'Satanic Government' in restoring order in his home town (Ahmedabad).

The unerring instinct for safeguarding class interest reigns supreme, even in the prophet of spiritual civilization. The valuable properties of the Gujarati capitalists—notorious for sucking the blood of the Indian people by means of usury—were endangered by the 'infuriated mob'. Was it possible for any respectable bourgeois believing in the sanctity of private property, to stand aloof? Not only did Gandhi rush to the rescue, but under his presidency, the Satyagraha Committee ruled a temporary suspension of 'civil disobedience' and ordered every patriot to follow the noble example of their leader in helping the government restore order.

The response of the Moslem population to the Khilafat propaganda also showed that the country was undergoing a great social transformation. The bulk of the Indian Mohamedans had never been well informed of, much less interested in Pan-Islamism, which remained a fashionable cult among the reactionary intellectuals. The fact that the declaration of Jehad during the Tripoli and Balkan Wars as well as the entrance of Turkey into the great European conflict had left the Moslem masses of India practically unmoved, betrayed the weakness of the assumed religious solidarity on which Pan-Islamism was based. It proved that what could be possible several hundred years ago, had become untenable in the twentieth century. It was not the dismemberment of the Turkish empire that agitated the Indian Moslems in 1919, when they revolted en masse with the rest of the Indian oppressed class. Their revolt was also brought about by material causes, religion having very little to do with it essentially. Hunger, intensified exploitation, and above all the undermining of old property relations by the growth of native capitalism—all these factors contributed to the rebellious mood of the Indian masses, Moslems as well as Hindus. The agitation against the Rowlatt Bill and subsequently, the Khilafat propaganda were successful in stirring up a tremendous popular movement, because the ground had been prepared by these fundamental socio-economic causes.

The fiasco of the Hijrat (Khilafat emigration) revealed the superficiality of religious sentiment, held to be so strong among the Indian Moslems. It showed that movements which fail to take deeper causes into consideration and which are based on supposed forces, whose original vitality has been lost in the process of social evolution, are doomed to failure. The best that can be achieved by such movements is futile demonstrations, which but dissipate popular energy and provide some bitter and costly experiences.

By an ukase issued by the high priesthood, the faithful were enjoined to leave the Kafir-ridden India and migrate to the Mohamedan countries or to swell the forces of Ghazi Mustapha Kemal Pasha. This religious edict was very dubiously responded to. Hardly thirty thousand out of the seventy million Moslems of India took part in the holy Hijrat, and more than 90 per cent of these emigrants did not go further than a few dozen miles beyond the Indo-Afghan frontier. The treatment received from the government of the first Moslem country encountered convinced them of their error and of the advisability of returning home. A close investigation showed that in spite of the religious ardour which undoubtedly existed on the surface, it was some material motive or other which actuated almost every one of those emigrants. It was not so much the Fatwa of the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as the declaration of the Afghan Ameer to the effect that every Indian Moslem coming to his territories would be given free land as well as some working capital, that induced most of the emigrants to leave home. Of course, there were some young visionaries among them, and a number of daring adventurers bent on making fame and fortune upon some unknown battle-field.

No, it was not the indignation over the violation of the Khilafat, nor the capture of the holy places by the infidel that agitated the Moslem masses of India. They felt the impulse of the same social upheaval as shook their Hindu compatriots from their age-long resignation and apathy. The great wave of mass energy, which threw Gandhi and his colleagues in the national movement on to the towering crest of leadership, was raised neither by the awakening national consciousness of the Hindus, nor by the religious fervour of the Moslems. It was the revolt of the exploited masses, still unconscious of their purpose. It was provoked neither by the personality, however magnetic, of a prophet preaching a bankrupt gospel, nor by the injunction of the theological authorities, nor by the equivocal opposition of the bourgeois nationalist. The dynamic causes had been accumulating for a long time; the fire of discontent and unrest had been smoldering under the surface for years. At last the flames of open revolt broke out under such auspices that its essential social significance could be confused with wild political demonstrations. It is not the awakening national consciousness, but the socio-economic struggle of the exploited masses that has lent apparent potentiality to the political movement of the bourgeoisie. But the revolt of the exploited masses cannot be for any length of time a dependable force behind the nationalism of the bourgeoisie. It was possible in the past, in countries in which different socio-political institutions obtained in which the liberal democratic movement of the national bourgeoisie was based upon class antagonism. But the world has changed since then, and the relation between the classes of Indian society today do not correspond to those of central Europe in the forties and fifties of the nineteenth century, nor to those of the British American Colonies towards the end of the eighteenth century, nor to those of the Italian states in the eighteen-sixties. Bitter war between the classes is being waged all over the world. This world situation cannot but be reflected in the Indian movement. The awakening of mass energy, which has strengthened the movement for national liberation and which alone is capable of making this movement a success, at the same time weakens the position of the bourgeois nationalist movement.

The present situation in India is not unique in history. It is a stage of social development marked by a sudden and rapid introduction of modern means of production, resulting in a dislocation of the status quo, economic as well as territorial, of the population. Great Britain passed through a similar epoch in the years following the Reform Bill of 1832 and leading up to the Chartist Movement. But the same development cannot be expected to take place in India, although similar social and political tendencies are to be noticed in the movement. The propertied middle class, which eventually dominated the situation in England as a result of the Reform Bill and the failure of the Chartist Movement, does not occupy an identical socio-political position in India today. The struggle of the Indian bourgeoisie is not against a government controlled by rich landed aristocracy with strong feudal traditions; it is against the highest form of capitalism in an extremely critical moment of its existence. Consequently, there is a great possibility of compromise in this struggle.

Then, Democracy, the slogan of the English middle class in the days of the Reform Bill, and Chartism had lost all its illusive charms. After the bitter experience of almost a century, it stands today naked in its true character, which is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie heading towards a plutocratic Imperialism. The struggle of the English bourgeoisie took place when capitalist society was in the process of building. The Nationalism of India tends towards the aggrandizement of the native bourgeoisie at a time when capitalism has gone bankrupt—when it is collapsing under its own contradictions all over the world. In the thirties and forties of the nineteenth century, the bourgeoisie was a revolutionary factor in England as well as on the Continent. It was struggling to build a new civilization on the ruins of the old. To their great misfortune, this much cannot be said of the bourgeois nationalists of India. They have appeared too late on the scene. It is not their fault. They did not choose to be late. They were kept back by Imperialism. They are late, all the same; and, therefore, cannot be expected to play the same role as their kind played in other countries in more opportune times. In relation to the past and present Indian society taken as a whole, they are undoubtedly revolutionary. But they are trying to build what is crumbling the world over. They happen to be at the head of a revolutionary movement at a period when their class had ceased to be a revolutionary social force.

The Indian bourgeoisie today stands betwen two fires: one just beginning to break into flames still clouded with thick smoke, the other large and awe-inspiring, but its imposing glare is not that of living flames—it is of burning embers, to be soon covered with ashes. On one side is the great social upheaval fomented by the rising tide of mass energy which it endeavours to manipulate according to its own benefit and convenience; on the other side stands the Imperial Power intent upon maintaining its political and economic hegemony, but at the same time showing inclinations to compromise. The unbridled advance of the first, which alone can deliver a death blow to Imperial domination, spells a serious menace to the designs of the nationalist bourgeoisie; while to enter into partnership with Imperial capital is not a bad prospect. But the Indian bourgeoisie, by itself, is too weak to make the Imperialist Government pay heed to its demands. Therefore it must depend upon mass-action for imposing its will. This is playing with fire, digging one's own grave. It has been demonstrated on various occasions during the last three years, that the mass movement cannot always be kept within the limits set according to the convenience of the bourgeoisie. Signs are already to be seen that the workers and peasants, who are steadily emerging from the first confusion of a great social upheaval, do not find the Congress and Khilafat programmes include their interests. The inevitable consequence of these tendencies is the eventual divorce of the mass movement from bourgeois leadership. In that case, bourgeois nationalism will end in a compromise with imperial supremacy, and the liberation of India will be left to the political movement of the workers and peasants, consciously organized and fighting on the grounds of class struggle.

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Our Object*

The Indian people finds itself today in a great epoch-making period. The gigantic movement, which is shaking the entire country and is arresting the attention of the world, is not to be looked upon as a simple political phenomenon. It is of much deeper and wider significance than is commonly attributed to it. 'The determined struggle of a great nation for political freedom'—this is not an adequate definition of it. This definition covers but one aspect of the great movement, which fundamentally is a special upheaval of tremendous magnitude and historic importance. A people, which has been forced to remain in a state of social stagnation for a long, long time, is at last waking up in order to start on the road of progress. The government, which rules in the interests of the foreign exploiting class, must be the objective of the first onslaught, because this foreign domination has been the immediate cause of the backwardness of the Indian people. Colonial exploitation by imperialist capital prevented the normal economic development of the country; and a backward state of economic development is not conducive to the growth of the political consciousness of a people. Thus the British rule in India has been responsible for thwarting the free play of the forces of progress that are inherent in every human community. If the very existence of the British government is threatened today it is not because the people of India has suddenly made up its mind to free itself from foreign thraldom, but because the inexorable forces of progress inherent in the organism of Indian society—the forces that have been temporarily cramped by the British domination, among other agencies—are asserting themselves. The political aspect of the Indian movement—the desire for national freedom, the enthusiasm to fight for swaraj—therefore, rests on the background of the upheaval of these mighty social forces. The latter is the root-cause of all that is happening in India today; its development will determine the trend and consequences of the political struggle.

This being the case, it is evident that the correct guidance of the political struggle—the fight for national freedom—is conditional upon a clear and adequate understanding of the social foundation of the movement. Those who constitute the front rank of the Indian nation fighting for political emancipation from foreign domination must be aware of the nature of the forces that are urging the people on in this great struggle in which they are involved, a struggle which finds itself pitted against the British rule in its first stages, but which is destined to bring about much wider and deeper consequences than the termination of the absolute hegemony of imperial capital. The people of India must go forward, not only in the political field, but in other aspects of social life as well. The Indian movement, like all other political movements in history, is the expression of the urge for social progress. It is a revolt of the oppressed against all that has kept them in subjugation and stagnation. Therefore it is futile, to say the least, to rely on one agency of oppression in order to fight the other. Such tactics only confuse the masses and reveal the questionable social affiliation of the leaders. Those who resort consciously to such tactics want to replace national exploitation by class oppression.

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* Vol. I, No. 1, 15 May 1922. Editorial.

The leadership of the Indian movement, especially during the last three years, has been remarkable for these questionable tactics. Instead of helping the masses to develop economic and social consciousness, their ignorance has been relied upon for intensifying the political struggle. That is, instead of putting itself at the head of the spontaneous current of mass energy, the National Congress has greatly dissipated its leadership by acting to it. Here we are not going into the discussion as to whether the Congress followed this mistaken policy intentionally or not. What we want to point out is that in consequence of this mistaken tactics of relying on one agency of oppression, viz. ignorance, in order to right the other, the Congress has landed in political bankruptcy, after a spectacular career under the banner of non-cooperation. A people cannot be educated in modern political principles, the application of which is evidently the programme of our national struggle, until and unless they extricate themsleves from the bondage of religious superstitions and social prejudices. It is true, and nobody believes in it more than we do, that the people of India will not be able to get rid of these traditional bondages so long as they do not conquer the right to live a free and normal national life. And the first requisite for such a national existence is the end of foreign domination over the economic and political life of the country. But it will be disastrous to forget that out national energy can vanquish the foreign oppression only when it is directed in the channel of progress. Foreign rule has to be overthrown because it has been obstructing our national growth and is detrimental to our economic and social evolution. But if a programme is set up which frankly foregoes all forward movement of the Indian society, it is but logical that the advocates of such a programme are trying to obstruct the progress of the Indian people, and therefore are not capable of leading us in this great historical period of our national life. This was the case with the National Congress ever since it came under the influence of orthodox nationalism. At last it is falling victim to its own contradictions. Still unconscious of their mighty energy as well as their historic mission, the Indian masses will shape the destinies of our nation. The economic forces that are awakening them out of their age-long stagnation will assert themselves, and the leadership of the political movement must confirm to their imperious dictates.

It is a mistake to think that the movement is the creation of great personalities. On the contrary, leaders are created by the movement. The greatness of the leader comes in where he can understand the forces behind him and can guide the movement in accordance with the natural trend of these forces. The compromising politics of the moderates, those venerable fathers of Indian nationalism, brought the extremists, who under the leadership of Gandhi assumed the title of non-co-operators, into power. But the outstanding leaders of the non-cooperation movement have so far failed to appreciate the real magnitude of the forces they are called upon to marshal on the arena of national struggle. Believers in the false philosophy which teaches that a few great men can shape the destinies of a nation, these leaders neglected to look deep into the causes which brought about the gigantic popular upheaval. They failed to understand the forces which infused fighting spirit in the hitherto inert masses. Instead of leading the rebellious masses in accordance with their immediate demands, these leaders sought to impose on them their own will and idiosyncrasies. Had they followed the former course, they would have developed the consciousness of the masses of the people, because the latter would have seen in practice that the political movement for national liberation was closely related with their everyday life. The abstraction of a golden age under the aegis of a spiritual swaraj cannot for any length of time allure the pauperized masses fighting for a full meal or a piece of cloth. You cannot lead people into the battle in order to conquer the right of material progress by dinning in their weary ears the virtues of poverty and the philosophy of sacrifice. If poverty and simple living were the highest virtues, then who deserve more the Kingdom of Heaven than the Indian people?

However, the movement cannot always be either betrayed by the moderates or misled by the visionary non-cooperators. The masses, who are the backbone of the struggle for national liberation, are learning to find their own way. Bitter experience gained in hard struggles is clarifying their vision. They are no longer utterly unconscious of what they are fighting for. The debacle of moderates and the bankruptcy of the philosophy of non-violent non-cooperation will be inevitably followed by the shifting of the storm-centre of the political movement. The rebellious masses are no longer going to be utilized for the experiments of this or that socio-political philosophy. Further development of the national struggle will be based more and more consciously on the material needs and demands of those who will take part in it. In short, we are entering a new phase in our struggle for freedom. We will no longer grope in the dark. We will no longer exhort the hungry people to suffer some visionary swaraj to be attained by soul-force purified in the fire of poverty. Although it will be stupid to talk of premature violence, we are, nevertheless, of the opinion that non-violent revolution is an impossibility. The Indian masses—the workers organized in trade unions, the peasants forming their own fighting organs in the form of the Akali Dal, kisan sabhas, aikya sabhas, etc.—call for a realist orientation in our political struggle. To help the formation of this much-needed realist orientation is the object of THE VANGUARD.

Constructive Programme*

Since it was adopted by the Special Session of the Congress in Calcutta and ratified by the annual gathering at Nagpore as the most suitable method of our struggle, Non-Co-operation has gone through various transformations, ideological as well as tactical. In fact, there are very few who comprehend the tactical importance of Non-Co-operation and who possess the sagacity to wield it as a powerful weapon in the field of practical politics. From the very beginning, Non-Co-operation was looked upon as the programme of our movement, and not as a method to be applied in a particular stage of the struggle. This misunderstanding has resulted in shrouding a wise political manoeuvre in the halo of metaphysical abstractions.

A glance at the original resolution adopted at the Special Session in Calcutta does not leave us in much doubt regarding its purpose. It was intended to be nothing more nor less than a National Strike. A complete boycott of the government was to be organized. Of course, it must be said that the resolution was very crudely formulated; the methods suggested could not be looked upon as any too well thought out. It appeared that even the author himself did not have a clear enough conception of the consequences involved in the step he was taking. But there cannot be any mistake about the general intention. The movement had grown too big to be any longer restrained by constitutional fetters: new elements of an objectively revolutionary nature had entered and swelled the ranks of the national movement. The Congress could no longer remain a deliberative body, satisfied with futile resolutions and petition-mongering, if it was not to forfeit its title to national leadership. It was necessary to enter in the practical fight, to assume the leadership of the masses driven into a state of revolution by steadily developing dynamic causes. How to best execute the new task thrown upon it was the problem the Congress had to solve.

In order to ensure victory or at least to keep up the morale of the army, the general must hold out an objective calculated to be alluring to the fighters. Next comes the task of leading the army strategically—to find and apply clever tactics. In a political struggle the first is called a Programme and the second Tactics. Revolutionary developments in the country purged the Congress clean of Moderatism; after a period of confusion and hesitation it could not help but assume the command of the national forces. The entire situation was still too unclear, the forces to be led were still too heterogeneous to permit the formulation of a crystallized political programme. The leadership reflected the hopelessly mixed-up and contradictory tendencies struggling for supremacy, in a social organism thrown into a revolutionary confusion. Under such circumstances, the programme of the Congress could not be anything but a vague generalization; so it was inevitable that it should take up the fight thrust upon it, hoisting the banner of Swaraj. And it was to win this Swaraj, about which various classes had differing conceptions and some had none at all, that Non-Co-operation was inaugurated.

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* Vol. I, No. 2, 1 June 1922. Editorial.

Now, if such was the genesis of Non-Co-operation (and nobody will deny it), then it cannot and should not be hide-bound by personal dogmatism. Because in that case it loses its elasticity, and its application to practical politics becomes impossible. Despite the fact that the confused state of socio-economic forces did not permit the clarification of political ideology, a desire to change the existing condition was felt by all. British rule is immediately responsible for the present miserable condition of the Indian people; therefore it should be ended. The idea of Non-Co-operation was evolved out of the peculiar circumstances which made a frontal attack on the British government for the time being impossible. It would be as foolish as to hurl ourselves against a stone wall. Here comes in the question of strategy and tactics. We must undermine the strength of the enemy and organize our forces, making them ready to be led straight into an open offensive at the earliest possible opportunity. This is the synesis of Non-Co-operation, if it is to be considered a political weapon. Let us not make out of it a spiritual principle, or a political programme, or abstract pacifism. It is a weapon to be used cleverly and mercilessly in the fight, not to purify our souls, but to cripple the enemy with the express intention of destroying him altogether.

Looking at the question from this point of view, we must consider the present development of the Non-Co-operation movement as a metaphysical degeneration of the original idea which was impregnated with cleverness and virility. Non-Co-operation as a tactics in our political struggle has not failed; it has not been tried. Non-Co-operation of the doctrinarian pacifists, of the Tolstoyan passive-resisters has proved futile, as was to be expected. But in the hand of revolutionaries, who will know how to wield it, the method of mass-strikes organized on a nation-wide scale, is sure to develop as powerful onslaughts against the citadel of state-power.

Since the day Non-Co-operation was hedged in by the cult of non-violence, it has lost all its potentialities; its revolutionary possibilities have been sacrificed on the altar of sentimental pacifism, born of the dread that the interests of the respectable upper-class will be equally jeopardised by the systematic development of mass-action. The protagonists of Non-Co-operation switched themselves off into the blind alley of metaphysical politics, as soon as they understood that Non-Co-operation could not bear the desired fruits unless the broad masses were involved consciously in the movement, and that the inevitable consequence of a revolutionary action of the masses threatened everything they held sacred. Hence the great confusion of the last two years; hence the bankruptcy in which the Congress has landed. Besides the inability to formulate a definite programme in accordance with the dictates of the dynamic forces behind the movement, the lack of courage to wield the weapon of Non-Co-operation has been the cause of the pitiable impotency in which our leadership is found submerged today.

We must be realists, let us call a spade a spade. We have to fight an enemy who can rely upon all that modern science can provide. We can be crushed to the dust if we fail to find out first of all an equally unassailable ground. It is necessary to be careful, so that we may not be driven into premature action by provocation; but it is more necessary to see that the spontaneously awakened mass-energy is not dissipated on fantastic schemes which have no connecton whatsoever with the realization of our programme. Here again, we run against the same difficulty which is at the root of all the confusion in our movement. Nobody knows what is our programme; nobody has explained to us what it is we are fighting for. The period has passed when the undefined slogan of 'Swaraj' was adequate. In the last two years, the people have made considerable progress; they have gained much experience and consciousness. Vague promises held out by trusted leaders no longer inspire the people with enthusiasm; the old irresolute and hesitating tactics must be replaced by new ones suitable to the new situation.

Of late we find the Congress leaders feeling the necessity of a new programme. Everybody talks of a 'Constructive Programme'. But instead of going ahead, our leaders are sinking into impotency in the name of a constructive programme. It is virile and suitable tactics that are needed most at the present moment. The great problem before our leaders is to find new methods to conduct the powerful movement, which appears to have frightened many of them. But so far, they have failed to solve the problem. In the name of constructive programme they have given up Non-Co-operation, which still is the most suitable method, if we only know how to apply it. What we need is a revision of the original resolution of Non-Co-operation, with a view to strike out its useless and impractical clauses, and give prominence to those which have not been put into practice, although they are the only ones which will ever make Non-Co-operation an effective weapon in our struggle.

The giving up of practice by a few idealist lawyers will in no way injure the government. The law courts cannot be broken up by the impossible introduction of Arbitration Courts. So long as there will exist property-rights, the law courts will continue to be an inevitable apparatus of the society. The idea of starting National schools while without a national state is visionary; in no way does it injure the government. The Charka is an economic impossibility. None but the poor Indian toilers will be injured by its very problematical temporary success. Government employees cannot be induced to give up their jobs. So, are we to agree then with the wiseacres of the Liberal League that Non-Co-operation has failed? No, we repeat, it has not been tried. The successful application of Non-Co-operation depends upon those elements which are vital to the existence of the present system. It has to be carried into effect by those who can bring the entire life of the country to a standstill at any moment. It has to be realized by those who produce the vast wealth misappropriated by the British government and capitalists.

Non-Co-operation should cease to be the means of making martyrs of individuals; it should be an offensive weapon in the hand of the toiling masses of the country. The best method to be adopted at this stage of our struggle is not to put the people to sleep by the hum of the Charka, but to organize mass-strikes involving larger and larger numbers of workers. What will be a really constructive step is not to organize Congress Volunteers for picketing liquor shops, but to organize Labour Unions and Peasant Unions, not for passive resistance, but for aggressive mass-action.

But this revolutionary advance on the road of Non-Co-operation cannot be made unless we dare to awaken the class interest of the toiling masses. Vague promises of a Golden Age will not fascinate the people trained in the school of bitter experience. Therefore the imperative necessity of formulating a programme is forced upon us. Such a programme must include the remedy for the immediate grievances of those who are to lead the fight—on whom depends the success of Non-Co-operation—the workers and peasants of India.

Danger Ahead*

In the Manifesto to the delegates of the Ahmedabad Congress we pointed out the ominous possibilities which were sure to follow if the formulation of a definite programme would be deferred any longer, and if the tactics of our struggle would not be determined in accordance with the material needs and grievances of the awakening masses. It was at a great critical moment in our national history that the Ahmedabad Congress was convened. Profound objective vision—a revolutionary understanding of the forces behind our national awakening—was necessary to lead the movement out of that crisis. Our leadership not only failed to rise up to the situation but positively sabotaged the movement which stood on the verge of widespread revolutionary developments.

After Ahmedabad, the impotency and ridiculousness of whose resolutions were eclipsed by the frankly reactionary, not to say non-revolutionary, programme of Bardoli, the movement entered a stage of confusion and disintegration. The inability to surmount the crisis exposed its innate weakness and encouraged the government to initiate unrestricted repression, which culminated in the arrest and imprisonment of Mr Gandhi himself. The government anticipated that the magnificent demonstration of mass-energy during the Prince's visit would have its effects on the Ahmedabad Congress. In order to prevent such serious possibilities, it had resorted to terrorism already before the Congress met. But its nervousness was apparent. Those leaders, who could be expected to take a revolutionary stand, were locked up, but this step was taken more by way of measuring the strength of the movement than as the beginning of a determined reign of terror. The manifest anxiety of the government to negotiate, with the object of striking a compromise, bears out this contention. Had the Congress been able to push ahead instead of beating a retreat at the most favourable moment, the government of Reading would think twice before making such a free use of the big stick. In that case, the release of the political prisoners and many other immediate demands of the Congress could have been imposed upon the government whose precious prestige would thus have received a mortal blow.

But such a step was not to be expected from the Congress under its then leadership. Instead of leading the national army on the road of revolution, it was frightened by its mighty appearance which was denounced first as the 'expression of evil', then shamefully betrayed at Bardoli.

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* Vol. I No. 3, 15 June 1922, signed Manabendra Nath Roy. This was a six-page issue. S. N. R.

Thus was disclosed the cleavage that separated the revolutionary forces and those who pretended to guide them. The way before the government was clear. All the leaders, who could be expected to understand the situation, were quickly arrested and put in jail, the Congress organization was terrorized by wholesale prosecution and persecution, and at last to vindicate the might of the government, Mr Gandhi, who had become the greatest friend that the government could wish at that moment, was made a martyr. Then began the disintegration of the movement and an inevitable reshuffling of the various social elements that constituted it. This disintegration and readjustment are the outstanding features of the movement today.

It is not the arrest of this or that leader which has brought about this depression; nor is it the government repression which is to be looked upon as the greatest danger to the movement. The grave danger before us is the impending divorce of the masses from the Congress leadership. The Ahmedabad Congress revealed the incapability of our leaders to assume the command of the revolutionary forces; Bardoli and Delhi found them denouncing and running away from them. In the Manifesto to the 36th Congress we were told:

> The greatest problem before the Congress is how to enlist the full-hearted support of the people in the national cause; how to make the ignorant masses follow the banner of Swaraj. In order to solve the problem the first thing necessary is to know what is it that ails the masses? What do they want? What is needed for improving the immediate environment of their material existence? Because only by including the redress of their immediate grievances in its programme will the Congress be able to assume the practical leadership of the masses of the people.

The Congress has failed to do this. It has failed to understand the social character of the forces it pretended to lead. It ignored the most vital fact that the revolt of the toiling masses—a revolt that added potentiality to the national movement—was firmly against the unbearable conditions of material life. They could not be kept actively involved in a struggle which was not a fight having for its object immediate amelioration and radical cure of these conditions.

The imminent disintegration of the movement did not remain unnoticed by everybody. Long before this crisis came down upon us on the eve of the Ahmedabad Congress,—in fact ever since 1919 when a fundamentally revolutionary mass upheaval was dominated by a reactionary social philosophy,—we expected this period of disintegration and the consequent depression. We were always aware of the danger ahead, and repeatedly gave warning. This is what we said in the Manifesto to the Ahmedabad Congress:

> The oppressed, pauperized, miserable workers and peasants are bound to fight, because there is no hope left for them. The Congress must have the workers and peasants behind it; and it can win their lasting confidence only when it ceases to sacrifice them ostensibly for a higher cause, namely the so-called national interest, but really for the material prosperity of the merchants and manufacturers. If the Congress would lead the revolution, which is shaking India to the very foundation, let it not put its faith in mere demonstrations and temporary wild enthusiasm. Let it make the immediate demands of the Trade Unions its own demands; let it make the programme of the Kishan Sabhas its own programme; and the time will soon come when the Congress will not stop before any obstacle; it will be backed by the irresistible strength of the entire population consciously fighting for their material interests. Failing to do so . . .* despite its doctrine of soul-force, the Congress will have to give way to another organization which will grow out of the ranks of the common people with the object of fighting for their interests.

The Congress has failed to take this warning. It did not pay heed to these suggestions. Consequently, the masses are leaving the Congress. They are organizing Trade Unions and Peasants organizations under the baneful influence of humanitarian reformists, self-seeking leaders and government agents. None of these people can be expected to be friendly to the cause of our national freedom. Their object is to stem the tide of revolution in order to secure the existence of the present political and social system. But they are more clever and realistic than the Congress leaders. They pose as the champion of the interests of the working class, abandoned by the Congress in their struggle for existence. The ignorant toiling masses, not yet in a position to lead their own struggle, are falling prey to these scheming politicians or masked defenders of imperialism. These improvised 'labour leaders' are endeavouring to lead the rebellious masses astray from the straight road of revolution into the channel of reform and compromise. Nevertheless, it is but natural that the exploited workers would rather follow them than the Congress, which never did anything calculated to defend the immediate material interest of the masses.

Let us examine a few outstanding incidents. One of the serious revolutionary outbreaks in recent years has been the peasant movement in the United Provinces. What was the root cause of this movement? Terrible exploitation of the peasantry by the Talukdars. The British government, which is a party to this exploitation, had nevertheless, always presented a splendid opportunity to expose latter had been under this illusion*. But the movement which led up to the formation of the Kishan Sabhas presented a splendid opportunity to expose the government as well as to develop the revolutionary consciousness of the people. When the Kishan Sabhas came into open conflict with the landowning class, it was no longer possible for the government to maintain its hypocritic role. Police and military were rushed to the scene in order to preserve 'law and order', which meant to defend the rights of the Talukdars to exploit the cultivators. This showed whose friend the government was in critical moments: the identity of the interests of the government and the rich propertied class was exposed. Here was a golden opportunity for the Congress to step in to agitate and organize the rebelling peasantry against the landowners and government. But the Congress failed. It not only did not take up the struggle of the peasantry, but it denounced them as enemies of 'national welfare' (Rai Barelli, Gorakhpur, Chauri Chaura etc.) and subsequently upheld the right of the Talukdars as sacred and inviolable (Bardoli Resolution).

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* The gap and dots are in the original printed text in *The Vanguard*. S. N. R.

The government, however, did not stop halfway. Simultaneously, with the terrorism started in order to suppress the acute outburst of an agrarian revolt, it adopted other measures calculated to go to the root of things. First, it forced the Oudh Rent Act upon the reluctant Talukdars and their lackeys in the Legislature. The case was bluntly put to the Talukdars. They were to choose one of the two alternatives, viz. to help the government quell the discontent of the peasantry by removing a few of their most flagrant grievances, or to face a widespread revolt threatening the very existence of the landowning class. The government could easily impose its point of view upon the Talukdars, because the second alternative could not be chosen by the latter without the full support of the state forces.

The second step taken by the Government was the organization of the Aman Sabhas, with the object of convincing the agitated peasantry that their grievances could be best redressed by peaceful organization, which the government was ready to patronize. The real motive of the Aman Sabhas is known to all; but the fact that their programme appeals to the struggling peasantry is undeniable. Had the Congress been able to make the programme of the revolutionary Kishan Sabhas its own, instead of preaching to the hungry rebels the injustice of the Sevres Treaty, the atrocities of Amritsar or the abstraction of a psychological Swaraj, fire would be taken out of the government's gun, and such a mighty revolutionary force as the millions and millions of pauperized peasantry would be won over to take a consciously active part in the struggle for national freedom, led by the Congress. But it was not to be so; the social philosophy of the Congress, as well as its political orientation, precluded it from taking such a revolutionary step.

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* [sic] The sentence is reproduced exactly as it stands in the printed copy. Clearly a line had been misplaced and left out by the printer. S. N. R.

The failure of the Congress to adopt the right attitude towards the strikes and trade unions has been equally remarkable. No attempt at all has been made to help the struggling workers in their fight to improve the miserable condition they live in. When the workers were in a state of spontaneous revolt produced by the unbearable economic conditions, the Congress held up before them the vague formula of Swaraj, which was to be attained by self-purification through self-sacrifice and suffering. Time and again the Congress called upon the workers to declare Hartal, but every serious strike having for its object economic betterment of the working class by inflicting injury upon the employer, was not only looked upon indifferently but was condemned and sabotaged by the Congress. Mr Gandhi declared: 'It is dangerous to make political use of the factory workers'. This dictum has till today been the guiding principle of the Congress in its relation to the most revolutionary factor in the Indian movement. Instead of assuming the leadership of the rebellious working class by including the redress of its immediate grievances in its action programme, the Congress* remained indifferent to, and on many occasions took a positively hostile attitude towards the struggle of the workers. The result of this policy, dictated by its narrow political outlook and too much respect for the interest of the propertied class, is bearing fruit which will be disastrous unless it is rectified before it is too late.

The overthrow of the foreign domination, which is the avowed object of Indian Nationalism, cannot be realized without the strength and effort of that class of the people which has nothing to lose by the consequences of such an overthrow. Which is this class? The wage-slaves toiling in the factories and on the field. The number of these wage-slaves is legion. This legion alone can win the national independence of India. The propertied class—the landowners, merchants, manufacturers, those engaged in government employment and liberal profession—need 'law and order', a peaceful state of society, for its development. The overthrow of one political institution will inevitably be followed by a period of disturbance. The government maintained by violence and brute force cannot be overthrown without violence and brute force, the pious desire of the Mahatma and our 'spiritual civilization' notwithstanding. Therefore, the aristrocrats as well as the thin layer of rich middle class will always be on the side of the English in the crucial moment. And those who are dependent on these two social elements will never advocate such measures as threaten the established order. So it is clear the lower middle-class Extremism cannot and will not go very far beyond the limits set by the Moderates. Then what is going to happen? Will the Indian people always remain under a foreign domination?

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* Words inserted with brackets were misplaced by the printer and have been restored here to their correct position. S. N. R.

No. India's national freedom will be attained through the efforts of the workers and pauperized peasantry who will go boldly into the struggle, because they have nothing to risk, but everything to gain. Struggle for national freedom is a revolutionary struggle; therefore it has to be carried on by a class which is socially revolutionary—whose further progress is impossible unless the socio-economic stagnation and obstacles are broken and washed away by a gigantic tide of revolution. This class is the workers in the cities, in the mines, on the plantations, on the railways, as well as the pauperized peasantry. The hopelessly miserable condition they have sunk into cannot be improved under the present system, which is sustained by the British government, and which cannot, therefore, be radically changed without overthrowing the British government as well as revolutionizing the socio-economic philosophy on which such a political institution rests. Neither the overthrow of the British government, nor the formulation of a new socio-economic philosophy can be expected from an element which is not irreconcilably hostile to the present state of things, not only political, but economic and social as well. When the prospect of the Indian movement is surveyed from this angle of vision, it becomes evident that the freedom and subsequent progress of the Indian nation depend upon the conscious and concerted action of the objectively and inevitably revolutionary masses.

This being the case, the Congress, which embodies the leadership of our national struggle, should come closer to the masses, should try to win their economic fight. But this has not been done. The mass-movement is being led into a reformist channel by the conscious or unconscious agents of the exploiting class, native and foreign. Its revolutionary fervour is going to be choked in the stuffy atmosphere of conservative Trade-Unionism based on the bankrupt theory of 'collective bargaining', and of the Peasant Co-operative Movement, calculated to create a class of conservative small farmers as a bulwark against the surging agrarian revolt threatening the very foundation of landownership. If these two tendencies are allowed a free field for a comparatively short space of time, the divorce of the revolutionary mass-movement from the wide political struggle for national freedom will be complete, and the British domination will be secure for the time being; because, deprived of the potentiality drawn from the awakening mass-energy, the Congress will inevitably degenerate into Constitutional Democratic agitation of the Moderates on the one hand, and futile social reformism of the intellectual middle-class on the other.

This is the danger ahead of us, and it is a serious danger for those who really want to see our country free and the nation started on the road to progress.

Manabendra Nath Roy.

Our Immediate Task*

The possession of a clear idea about the ultimate goal is essential for every movement. But to know what we want is not always sufficient for realizing the desired end. Various obstacles stand between us and our goal. Besides the intent and resolute will to arrive at the goal, it is necessary to be able to know how to go there, how to overcome the thousand and one obstacles that separate us from it, how to muster in the struggle all the available forces capable of sweeping away these obstacles. The first part of the work has been accomplished in the last three years. The agitation and propaganda of the Congress have crystallized the Nation's will to freedom. Why it was possible for the Congress to accomplish this task in 1920–21 and not ten or five years earlier, is a question to be answered by the study of our social development. What sort of Swaraj is to be established—whether it will be Dominion Status, or Home Rule, or complete separation from the British Empire—is a political question to be solved according to the socio-economic necessity of the various classes with diverse and often conflicting interests. The first is a question of social history, whereas the second is the great political issue on which there cannot be a united national opinion. But what is an accomplished fact is that the people of India today are not satisfied with the present state of affairs, not only political, but economic and social as well, and that all the elements of our society are involved in the movement having for its object some change in our existing system. In short, a desire for national freedom is kindled in India. The nature of this freedom has not been defined, the extent of this freedom is a disputed question; but the fact remains that the will to freedom is to be [sic] felt. And the activities of the Congress during the last three years have contributed immensely to the intensification and crystallization of this national will.

In balancing our accounts we must put this much on the credit side. This much has been accomplished. The next phase of our movement has to be built on this foundation.

The goal fixed and the desire to arrive at it awakened, the next task is to find ways and means to attain it. Swaraj—be it Dominion Status or Home Rule or Complete Separation—cannot be realized without a struggle with the British rulers, who will not give in an inch unless forced to do so. Consequently, the immediate task before the Congress is to develop this struggle between the government and the people fired with the will to freedom. To accomplish this task, the formulation of a Programme of Action is essential. This programme should be free from wordy but impotent Extremism, and take the realities of life into consideration.

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* Vol. I No. 4 1 July 1922. Editorial.

Let us examine the situation. In spite of the existence of national feeling in every strata of the people, in spite of the fact that the hitherto indifferent and inarticulate masses have of late demonstrated not only the desire but the energy to fight for national liberation, in spite of its spectacular success in sweeping the country with it during the last three years, the Congress today has obviously come to its wit's end. The termination of one phase of its activities has been reached, but preparation for entering upon the next seems to be lacking. To be able to make these preparations with a vision of the nature of the struggle ahead is the immediate task before us. We must reorganize our forces; we must consolidate our ranks to begin a new offensive.

Why are the masses of the more conscious workers and peasants losing enthusiasm for the Congress? We should not deceive ourselves. It is a deplorable fact that the Congress is losing the backing of the mass-movement, which is being diverted into tame reformist channels of an economic nature. All the organized Trade Unions are today controlled by non-political leaders. The peasant movement is drifting on by itself, having no organic connection with the political leadership of the Congress. The high tides of first enthusiasm have begun to subside. The movement has arrived at a stage where sentimental agitation is no longer sufficient to keep the people in a fighting temper. Something concrete has to be put before them. The Moderates representing the economic and political interest of the rich mercantile and industrial class, are fighting for a definite object and are well acquainted with the methods needed in their struggle. The Congress, in spite of its Extremism as against the Moderatism of the Liberals, cannot be said to be free from the influence of these economic interests. Consequently, its policy has been to utilize the mass-energy for its political purposes. Consciously or unconsciously, it followed the policy of arousing the enthusiasm of the masses, without doing anything to awaken simultaneously their revolutionary consciousness. National Independence remained an undefined programme shrouded in vague abstraction. The day has come when the fruits of such politics must be reaped. If the Congress wants to represent only the interests of the small middle class in the fight for national freedom, it must lose the support of the masses.

To save the Congress from such an ignominious end, to enable it to lead the struggle of the Indian people further ahead on the road to freedom, the adoption of a fighting programme is indispensable—a programme by which the Congress will assume the leadership of the struggle for existence, in which the masses of the people are involved. If the Congress stands, not for the aggrandizement of a small class, but the liberation of the entire Indian people, it must adopt such a programme and tactics as will bring it closer to the actual struggle undertaken by the Indian people.

While the middle class has demonstrated nothing but its readiness to compromise, the masses, in spite of their ignorance, in spite of non-revolutionary leadership, have shown the courage to fight. Our Programme of Action should be formulated with the object of intensifying this fight. How can it be done?

National freedom is more than an abstract ideal. We, as well as any other subject people, want national freedom because without it, it is not possible for us to march on the road of progress. This is the philosophical aspect of Nationalism; but there are more concrete aspects, common to all national movements. The class of Indian people, which want Dominion Status, expect to be benefited by such a political change; therefore it is a political ideal to them. The merchants and manufacturers of India cannot prosper so long as the country remains a monopoly of imperialist capital. Therefore they stand for fiscal autonomy and protection for indigenous industries. They will struggle to secure a political status ensuring their economic interests. The intellectuals are becoming revolutionary under the pressure of unemployment; therefore, they demand Indianization of the Public Services and Complete Self-Government (Home Rule) to be realized within the shortest possible time. Thus, to all these sections of the upper and middle classes of the population, the philosophy of Nationalism is based on some material benefit or other to be acquired as a result of Self-Government, whose character and extent, of course, vary according to their respective conceptions. But what is the material basis of Swaraj, in the name of which the masses of the people have been called upon to follow the lead of the Congress?

Like the awakening of the upper and middle classes, the mass upheaval of the last years has also been brought about by imperious economic laws, which have aroused in the exploited classes the desire to change their present condition. The struggle, into which the workers and peasants of India have thus been driven, corresponds in its initial stages with the struggle for national freedom. And it is this struggle of theirs that lent the driving force to the movement for national liberation. The middle classes of India are not in a position to carry the struggle for national freedom to a victorious end by themselves. Consequently, the Programme of Action of the Congress, which is the leader of the National Movement, cannot leave the material necessities of the working class untouched, and adjust its tactical moves in accordance with the convenience of the thin layer of the propertied and intellectual middle class.

Today all but the rank and file of the national army, which has fought valiantly and is alone capable of leading the fight to a victorious end, have an understanding of the kind of Swaraj they want. But to the rank and file, that is, the workers and peasants, it has never been presented as anything but a sentimental abstraction. Can a people, driven to rebellion by insufferable pangs of hunger, be expected to follow such a lead forever? No. And this fateful negative is to be heard by every one not blinded by class interest or determined to be deceived. The masses are showing unmistakably, their desire for material betterment. What else is the significance of the innumerable strikes and the agrarian revolts spreading over the country like wildfire? The masses are becoming more and more conscious of the material interests behind the movement in which they became involved spontaneously. It is no longer possible to hold them under the spell of personalities or sentimental agitation. They are heading inevitably towards a bitter fight for the improvement of their immediate material conditions. If the Congress can adjust its politics and programme of national independence in such a way as will recognize this immediate fight of the working class and poor peasantry as a part and parcel of the bigger struggle it wants to lead, then it will succeed in maintaining its political leadership over the mass-movement. In that case, the immediate task becomes very evident. There will be no room for vacillation and groping in the dark; nor will there be any necessity of throwing longing glances towards the Moderates.

To organize the industrial workers into class-conscious revolutionary unions which will first fight for higher wages, shorter hours, better living conditions etc., and enforce these demands by means of mass strikes to be converted into political strikes at every possible opportunity; to capture the leadership of the spontaneous peasant revolts by boldly giving out the revolutionary slogan of Non-payment of Rents and Taxes; to organize mass resistance against the projected increase of indirect taxation, to proclaim the unconditional abolition of landlordism under Swaraj; such are the principal planks of the Fighting Programme which is necessary. The adoption of such a programme will infuse new vigour in the movement. By such an act, its social foundation will be shifted from the quicksands of wordy Extremism on to the bedrock of the pauperized militant masses, whose present miserable plight cannot be affected in the least by a superficial re-adjustment of the economic and political structure and whose salvation, therefore, lies through a Revolution which incidentally will bring National Freedom to India.

Labour Organization*

Anybody fairly acquainted with the situation in India must subscribe to the view that her future depends, if not altogether, at least greatly on the workers and peasants. We have shown repeatedly how the plausible programme of paralysing the government by means of non-co-operation cannot be realized without the active support of the working masses. We have also pointed out how and where the Congress has failed to enlist this support. This failure of the Congress had not been altogether accidental. It has not been a mistake of omission, but of commission. In spite of the historical fact that it was the spontaneous awakening of the exploited masses that lent potentiality to the national movement led by the Congress, the latter could not help being the political party of the propertied classes. All talk of humanitarianism and the crocodile tears shed over the poverty of the Indian masses could not hide the true social affiliation of the Congress. It is an obvious fact that whenever a choice had to be made between the rich propertied class and the exploited working masses, even the Mahatma himself did not hesitate to stand by the former.

But if the working class is historically destined to carry forward the standard of national liberation, it must develop its own organization. Just as in course of time it woke up and assumed a surprisingly fighting mood, inspite of the degrading ignorance inherited through centuries of servitude, so will it from its class organization suitable for the great historic mission before it. To help the growth of this organization is, therefore, the paramount task of all revolutionary nationalists. The inevitable consequences of the present gigantic social upheaval are apprehended more or less by all the elements whose interests are threatened by this revolutionary development. The rise of the Indian worker, the awakening of the Indian peasantry, is a factor. It can no longer be ignored; it has to be contended with. Therefore; we find all kinds of people busy in organizing labour. Among the bumper crop of our 'labour leaders' are to be found humanitarian religionists, social reformers, pseudo-liberals in the pay of the employing class, briefless barristers, government agents, English labour aristocrats, and what not. It is a sheer illusion to think that these self-appointed leaders care any more for the interests of the labouring masses than does the Congress. Nevertheless, at the present moment, the direction of the labour movement is almost exclusively vested in

* Vol. I No. 7 15 August, Editorial.

such elements as are no less hostile to the liberation of the working class than are the British to the freedom of the Indian people. It is so because, on account of its extreme economic and intellectual backwardness, the Indian working class is not yet in a position to throw up its own class leadership. But the movement is there, threatening the placid self-satisfaction of the capitalists and landlords, native as well as foreign. Our improvised labour leaders are but the gallant defenders, conscious or unconscious, of the propertied rich. So it is quite evident that such leadership will not direct the awakening workers and peasants in the right channel; on the contrary, its object is to prevent it, as long as possible, from assuming that dangerous character it is destined to do eventually. Under this baneful leadership, labour organization in India will be turned into a bulwark of conservative reformism, which no more constitutes a menace to British domination than does the wordy extremism of the bankrupt lower middle class.

It appears that to the majority of the revolutionary nationalists, the importance of labour organization for the struggle for national freedom is not clear. The first consideration that makes them dismiss the suggestion of intense activity for organizing the working class is the apprehension of disturbing national unity. They are sincerely afraid of splitting the ranks of the national army. This over-sensitiveness is, however, not the result of any studied deliberation, but of their affiliation, at least by birth, with the upper classes. But this fear does not prevent the development of labour organizations, which are a historical phenomenon, and therefore must grow and play their revolutionary role in history, all remonstrances and apprehensions notwithstanding. The solution of the problem before us demands the courage of facing the reality. An issue does not become non-existent by our shunning it.

Given the foremost necessity of working out our national liberation, it is logical that the forces involved in this struggle must be mobilized and consolidated by all means. But this much needed mobilization will never come out of the realm of sincere desire if, in the name of an imaginary unity, the ever growing socio-economic forces are overlooked. All classes of the Indian society are more or less interested in the termination of the foreign domination, which stands in the way of the progress of all of them. But this plain fact has not prevented the 'politically minded' upper and middle classes from dividing themselves into the camps of Moderates, Progressives, Non-Co-operators, Extremists and so forth. These elements are educated, intelligent and thus are supposed to understand our national problem. Nevertheless they are divided. Why? Because there exists shades of difference in their respective material interests. Then, how can we expect that two great divisions of the society, namely the exploiting and the exploited, will be united on a programme that only takes into consideration the interests of the former? Here steps in the orthodox nationalist, the protagonist of our spiritual civilization as against the material civilization of the West, and tells us, 'Don't import into our holy land that pernicious talk about classes: we believe in the spiritual equality of all, and therefore, there is no room for classes in our society'. This is not only avoiding an issue thrust upon us, but worse still, it is a brazen defence of rank reaction. But it does not alter the situation; despite all spiritual cant and pious desire, the classes are there and our national movement is determined consciously or unconsciously according to the development of them. Had it been otherwise, there would not have arisen a labour movement apart from the Congress or other national organizations. The workers and peasants are expressing the demands of their classes through strikes and agrarian revolts. They will form their class organization to back up these demands. And in so far as these demands cannot be fulfilled so long as the country remains under foreign imperialist domination, the workers and peasants will form part of the forces struggling for national liberation. But the mobilization of these forces must be carried on the ground, first of all, of their immediate class interest, which is the driving motive behind their awakening. Hence the supreme importance of the labour organization for the future of the struggle for national liberation.

The unity of the national forces will not be realized by submerging the interests of the exploited majority to that of the rich few at the top. This sort of superficial unity has become untenable by the revolutionary awakening of the toiling masses, which awakening has strengthened immensely the national movement. Therefore, it follows logically that the required mobilization of the national army will be achieved through the organization of the labouring class. This paramount task should not be looked upon as detrimental to our national interests, although any growth of revolutionary consciousness on the part of the exploited majority is prejudicial to the continued safety of those who live and prosper on the product of exploited human labour power. Because the goal of revolutionary nationalism is not looking for the aggrandizement of a small section, but of the entire Indian people.

Being of such great importance, the task of organizing labour should not be left in the hands of those, most of whom are only anxious to divert the movement from a revolutionary channel. Destined to play a revolutionary role, the labour organization should be built on revolutionary principles, in consonance with the forces at present throwing the working masses in a state of great ferment. This can be done, not by reformists anxious to perpetuate the present order of class-ridden society by pacifying the rebellious working masses with palliatives, but by revolutionaries free from allegiance to the upper classes. If left to the former, the young labour movement will be prevented from developing in a way which will make it the revolutionary vanguard of the army of national liberation. Therefore, the task of labour organization should no longer be shirked by all those who want to see our country free within the shortest possible time.

A World Congress

The Fourth World Congress of the Communist International will be held in Moscow on the 7th of November, the anniversary of the Russian Revolution. The representatives of the revolutionary working class of all the countries will assemble in this International Congress to discuss the ways and means of conducting the struggle against capitalist and imperialist domination. Unlike its predecessors, the Communist International does not confine its sphere of action within the limits of the countries of Europe and America. It embraces the toiling masses of the entire world. The previous Congress have been attended by representatives from the Asiatic countries, side by side with those from Europe and America. In view of the fact that the problems before the subject peoples of the East are not the same as those of the Western working class, Special Congress have been held from time to time. The Congress of the Peoples of the East held at Baku in August 1920 and the Congress of the Far Eastern Toiling Masses held in Moscow in February this year are the most important ones.

The revolutionary movements in Turkey, Persia, Egypt, China, Korea, Japan and even the Dutch Indies maintain close connection with the Communist International, whose main pillar is the working class of Europe and America. The latter is struggling to liberate itself from the yoke of capitalism, which in the form of imperialism exploits the subject peoples in the colonial and 'protected' countries. Consequently, it is necessary that both the elements exploited by the same agency should come together, in order to overthrow the common enemy by a joint effort. The understanding of this necessity has drawn the revolutionaries of many a subject country within the ranks of the Communist International, which is the General Staff of the World Proletariat engaged in a historic struggle for building up a new society on the ruins of the present, based on the right of exploitation of man by man. The days of revolutions on a purely national scale and with a purely national ideal are gone. Civilization has reduced the size of the world. Peoples are very closely related together politically, economically and even militarily. A grave change in one country affects many others in greater or lesser degree. Therefore, the struggle of the subject nationalities, in spite of their historic importance, has become an integral part of the world-wide class struggle, which is the most outstanding feature of contemporary history. The entire human society today stands divided into two hostile camps—exploiter and exploited. This class antagonism has always been the characteristic of civilized society. In fact, 'Human history is a history of class-struggle'. But this class antagonism has never been more naked, more brutal than it is today. The whole world is involved directly or indirectly in the great sweep of this struggle between the exploiting class of all the countries on one side and the toiling masses on the other. The vertical divisions of nationality, race, religion etc. are submerged in this great horizontal cleavage, which is growing wider and wider every day.

Those involved in a national struggle must take their stand on the side of the exploited masses, because both of them are pitted against the same enemy. But in the ranks of the subject people struggling for freedom, there are elements whose existence and prosperity rests on the right of exploitation. These elements are naturally against joining hands with the international army of the revolutionary working class. But by so doing they forfeit their claim to lead the fight of national revolution; because, by opposing the interests of the working class they identify themselves with the imperialists. In every subject country there are such elements, which stand in the way of a union between the national revolutionary movement in the colonial countries with the working class of the West. Thus we see that although in our nationalist ranks there is a cry for foreign propaganda in order to secure moral and even material help for our fight for freedom, the very name of the Communist International or the Russian Revolution—which latter is not a local affair, but one of world import—is practically forbidden. Many of our leaders have outdone the British ruling class in holding up the bogey of Bolshevism. The latest phase of this stupid agitation is the fuss made over the *Morning Post* report about the Russian gold. But the truly revolutionary elements—those not restricted by any consideration of vested interest, but inspired with the object of a complete national liberation of the Indian people—must have a wider vision. They must know that the interest of the majority of the Indian people should not be sacrificed for that of a few on the top. And the untrammelled social and economic progress of the masses of our people demands, first of all, complete national independence. This cannot be attained without the active co-operation, moral, political and even material, of the organized revolutionary forces of the world.

Consequently, no Indian revolutionary can be indifferent to the coming World Congress, which must be attended by representatives of the revolutionary people of India fighting for national emancipation. It is not unprecedented for Indian nationalists to be present in International Socialist Congress. Almost all the Congresses of the Second International, which proved to be no better than the imperialist bourgeoisie on the outbreak of the European war, were attended by Indian nationalists looking for sympathy. Seldom they were listened to. And when men like Dadabhai Naoroji imposed his personality upon the indifferent social democratic theoreticians, some half-hearted resolutions of sympathy were passed by a gathering utterly oblivious of the questions touched by such resolutions. Today, the situation is altogether changed. The revolutionary leaders of the Western proletariat extend their comradely hand to the subject peoples. They are not doing it in a spirit of humanitarianism, nor are they content with expressing platonic sympathy. They want to have close union in an active struggle. The ways and means for this union are discussed in the Congresses of the Communist International with as much earnestness as is devoted to the question relating to the struggle in their respective countries.

Specially should this Congress be attended by those who have undertaken the task of leading the workers and peasants of India. These leaders of the Indian working class need much education in order to be able to solve the problem before them. They should not miss one opportunity that brings them in contact with those who have acquired immense experience in the course of a long struggle. For all these reasons it is very necessary that representatives of the revolutionary people of India should come to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International.[*]

M. N. Roy.

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[*] Vol. I No. 8 1 September 1922, signed M. N. Roy.

The Congress of the Peoples of the East was held at Baku from 1 September to 8 September 1920, attended by 1, 891 persons. There is a Verbatim Report (stenograficheskii otchet) of the Congress available in Russian. The First Congess of the Toilers of the Far East took place at Moscow from 21 January to 27 January; its most complete account was published in English from Petrograd in 1922. Roy did not attend the Baku Congress but he was a member of the Presidium of the Moscow Congress. For detailed official reports of these two-and the Fourth World Congress: *Pervyi s'ezd narodov Vostoka, Baku*, Petrograd, 1920; *Biulleteni IV Kongressa Kominterua*, Moscow, 1922; *The First Protokoll des vierten Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale*, Hamburg, 1923. S. N. R.

The Bolshevik Bogey*

The government has smelt Bolshevism in *The Vanguard* and has put it under ban. Such a disquietude was created among the British bourgeoisie by the appearance of *The Vanguard* that the Under-Secretary had to reassure the House of Commons that it would be kept out of India. This over-nervousness is amusing, because instead of making the desired show of power, it reveals the weakness of imperialism when pitted against a really revolutionary force. *The Vanguard* voices the sentiment of the exploited labouring masses of India. No matter from where it is published, it is the organ through which is expressed the aims and aspirations of the workers and peasants of India. It is their vanguard and to rally them in battle array is its mission. This is extremely menacing to the British rulers; much more menacing than the sloppy sentimental nationalism of the middle class, which by its very nature is utterly incapable of doing any serious injury to the foreign oppressor, and which can be easily appeased by some petty concessions not very much more substantial than those which bought the services and loyalty of the Liberals.

The British government knows very well where lies the real danger. It knows who is its deadly enemy. Therefore, while reassuring the representatives of British imperialism assembled in the House of Commons, Winterton declared that 'there would be no hesitation in prosecuting' those reproducing any articles from *The Vanguard*; he stated that the government 'was satisfied that the activities of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee meant no harm'. And this statement was made after all the howls raised by the Die-Hard Press in India as well as England against the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee, whose function was represented to be to investigate if a revolution can be started, and whose blood was demanded. This is very significant and should be an object lesson for all those sincerely desiring to see our country free. Because here is our enemy gratuitously indicating to us where is deposited the revolutionary energy of the nation. *The Vanguard* is born of this depository and, therefore, the government is determined to crush it; whereas with all its imposing appearances and occasional threatening talks, the Congress is no longer looked upon by the government as anything seriously dangerous. Why? Because, by severing itself from the dynamics of mass-energy the Congress has ceased to be a revolutionary body; in fact, it vigorously repudiates any revolutionary blemish on its part.

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* Vol. I, No. 9, 15 September 1922. Editorial.

From its first appearance, *The Vanguard* has been damned by the official press as Bolshevik propaganda. This bogey of Bolshevism was raised with the insidious motive of creating a spirit of suspicion and hostility against it in that section of the Nationalist movement which is predominated by the interests of the upper and middle classes. But let not the cry of Bolshevism terrify the revolutionary nationalists; because India will be liberated from foreign domination only by the revolutionary action of the labouring masses, whose political philosophy and social ideal cannot be anything but Bolshevism. Let it be said here for the information of those interested that Bolshevism is not a bloody carnage and chaos as depicted by imperialist propaganda: it is a term which originally designated the majority faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. Today Bolshevism is an international term which embodies the revolutionary principles of Socialism. And Socialism stands for the end of all exploitation of man by man.

What do the vast majority of the Indian people—the majority without whose active participation the struggle for national liberation cannot succeed—need? Is it spiritual sublimation or material betterment? With due deference to the advocates of the first, we must say that what the common people need and what is the real motive-force of the national movement is the second, that is, an improvement of their material condition. The working class of India is the victim of exploitation. Therefore, what the working class, which constitutes the vast majority of the nation, requires cannot be realized without putting an end to a system that is based on the exploitation of man by man. Hence it follows that the labouring masses of India will not be actively involved in a movement which does not stand for improving their material condition by ending, at least by curbing the rankest aspects of the system of exploitation.

This being the case, neither the upper-class politicians of the Liberal party nor the middle-class nationalists are capable of rallying the majority of the people under the banner of national liberation, because they are equally opposed to any such measure as will in the least affect the sacred right of private property. But the lot of the expropriated labouring masses cannot be improved without cutting into the privileges of the upper classes thriving on unpaid labour. On the other hand, the exploited masses will not consciously take part in any movement which does not promise them what they need. Those who will understand this fundamental character of our movement and will have enough revolutionary spirit to rise above the consideration for the property-rights of the upper strata of the society, will be alone capable of leading the labouring masses in the struggle for national liberation. *The Vanguard* is the organ of this revolutionary element, which is historically destined to carry on the struggle to a victorious end. This being the case, is it any wonder that the government is afraid of this revolutionary vanguard, which however, is ridiculed by some paragon of Indian Nationalism as 'leaders who want to produce mass- revolution from a distance of several thousands of miles'. (*The Indian Social Reformer*).

But the British Imperialists know better than the editor of the *Social Reformer*, whose progressiveness does not go further than the formula of Non-violent non-co-operation, which he accepted after much hesitation. Mass Revolution, which seems to terrify our upper class nationalist leaders no less than it does the British imperialists, is not produced by the sweet will of leaders, be they on the spot or several thousand miles away. Nor is it pacified by the abhorrence of the leaders on the spot. The Bardoli Programme might have been successful in checking the mass-revolution by throwing a young, as yet unformed movement into confusion, but it is not killed. Its life breath is breathed through *The Vanguard* which is but an expression of the forces developing inside our social organism. These forces are the deadly enemy of British imperialism, and anything that contributes to the development of these forces is looked upon as a source of real danger. Therefore, the government lets the illustrious protagonists of the Bardoli Gospel perambulate the country and harangue the bewildered multitude in metaphysical metaphors, but rushes to choke the voice of the expropriated majority, and does so in the name of the Bolshevik bogey, a magic strain which strikes the chord of property-right that binds the satanic government with our bourgeois nationalists of all shades. This reveals how shallow is the nationalism of the upper classes. They want a Swaraj which will bring the material betterment of their class, but only spiritual uplift to the downtrodden masses. If the latter shows any sign of independent activity, the damnation of Bolshevism is hurled at them and not a few of our nationalist leaders are found joining the chorus.

We believe in the Law of Economic Determinism. Our movement for national liberation is also subject to this law. The more the movement grows conscious of the economic motive underlying it, the more powerful does it become. Consequently, the party which undertakes the task of developing the economic motive that is urging the great majority of our people into action will be the most important factor in the struggle. Because it will become the party of the broad labouring masses, which constitute the basis of our society, and will be alone capable of leading the masses into active fight with a programme advocating such radical changes in the present political, economic and social institutions as will substantially improve their material condition and thus will open to them the opportunities of an intellectual and spiritual development. Those who preach some spiritual abstraction as the motive-force of nationalism, are unwittingly helping the permanence of British rule; because by such spiritual cant, the development of the material urge is obstructed, and the strength of the movement is consequently impaired.

It is neither upper-class constitutionalism nor middle-class pacifism that will solve the problem before us. The future belongs to the revolutionary party of the masses. Mass revolution is stalking all over the country. British Imperialism trembles at the sight of it. Our bourgeois leaders will no more brook it than the British rulers. But the nation can be freed only by mass-revolution. *The Vanguard* of this great revolution must therefore be suffocated by the iron grip of imperialism. But it cannot be done, because the vanguard of this revolution is in India. It is to be found among the rebellious peasantry and striking workers. The majestic voice of a great revolutionary class cannot be silenced. Before long it will resound louder and louder on the horizons of India. One Vanguard will perish, another will take its place, but it cannot be kept out of the country, since its soul is there. And this soul will speak in million voices which will drown the frantic shrieks and pitiable protests of the oppressor and his henchmen.

The Collapse of Extremism

A reshuffling of forces is the most outstanding feature of our movement at the present moment. Various social elements, which have been operating together within the folds of the Congress, cannot be held together any longer. The background of social confusion, on which the Non-Co-operation Movement was reared, has been undergoing a steady process of clarification, brought about by the development of the economic motives which involved these various classes into a conglomerate movement.

Since the Moderates, representing the upper classes including the landlords, industrial capitalists and rich intellectuals engaged in liberal professions, were lured away by the Reforms, the Congress became the political organ of the middle class. This was so as a result of the logic of social-economics. The Reforms satisfied, at least temporarily, the ambitions of the upper classes. The most galling of the disabilities imposed upon capitalist development were removed; imperial capital, forced by necessities created in consequence of the world situation, showed an inclination of conceding the Indian investors a place in the sun; accommodation was made for the upper state of the intellectuals in the higher grade of the public services; and the prospect of more political power was opened before the eyes of the large property-holding class. But none of these Reforms affected in any way the economic position of the middle class. The prospective aggrandizement of the rich intellectuals did not promise any amelioration to those eking out a miserable existence in the back benches of the bar, or behind the counter of the small trader, or in the ill-paid educational service of the lower grade, or to the thousands and thousands of students with a positively dark future staring them in the face. While the Congress was still under the control of the Moderates, the standard of Extremism was raised by the spokesmen of these lower middle-class elements. On the debacle of the Old Guard, these lower middle-class extremists came to power and imposed upon the Congress their ideology. The Non-Co-operation Movement was actuated by lower middle-class ideals. No revolutionary principle making either for a social readjustment nor even for a radical political change, was to be found in it. In essence it was but the sulking attitude of the dissatisfied, smarting under its own impotency. 'The Reforms did not concede anything to us; we will try to obstruct them'. Such was the attitude of the lower middle class, betrayed by the Liberals, and they were the guiding spirit of the Non-Co-operation Movement.

But from the very beginning, there existed two distinct and conflicting social tendencies within the folds of the Non-Co-operation Movement. One was the direct descendant of the Extremists in the old Congress camp and the other was the new incumbent pushed into the political arena by the development of a new revolutionary force, namely the awakening mass-energy. By intellectual training, political conviction and social affiliation, the former belonged to the same class as those bought over by the Reforms. Consequently it did not like to go so far away as would make the journey back impossible. Hence the opposition to certain clauses of the Non-Co-operation Resolution when it was first drafted. The latter tendency, which was in ascendancy in the heyday of the Non-Co-operation campaign, expressed the real lower middle class outlook on life. Not having a conviction of its own, its was driven from pillar to post. Its political programme was on the whole non-existent, and the rudimentary shreds of it to be found here and there, were conspicuous for indecision and vagueness. Closely connected with the village, it was conservative in its economic aspect. In every way it lived in the dead past, oblivious of the revolutionary upheaval all around.

Two elements of such a conflicting nature cannot go hand in hand very far. The Extremism of the former was political radicalism actuated by modern ideals. The Nationalism of the latter, on the contrary, is decidedly reactionary, fed upon old religious concepts. The only thing common to both is the abhorrence to revolutionary development. The former is too timid, too limited in its outlook, in short, too bourgeois to court anything revolutionary; while the latter is decidedly anti-revolutionary, because it stands on a social foundation which will be made untenable by a revolution. A negative ideal is not binding for ever. The break has occurred.

A duel is going on between the two forces: one, representing the progressive tendencies in the upper middle class, the other, embodying the lower strata of the same social class steeped in religious prejudices, economic conservatism, intellectual bankruptcy and a spirit of reaction in general. This duel is fought over the leadership of the Congress. The latter dominated the political movement during the last two years because, in spite of itself, it rode on the rising tide of mass-revolt. In its attempt to stir up reactionary nationalism of a religious brand, it called in the forces of mass-revolt, which powerful factor of social dynamics lent it temporarily a very imposing appearance. The former, that is the progressive strata of the middle class, threw in its lot with this movement, because there was no other place for it. On the one hand, the Reforms excluded it; on the other, the political movement was dominated by the reactionaries. The space in the centre was narrowed down to an insignificant and negligible factor. It was not enviable to stand there. Hence the alliance of the two such incompatible forces.

But, as was to be expected, the reactionary nationalism of the lower middle class has succumbed in the fierce clash of revolution and reaction. Today it is practically swept off the board of the political movement. It attracted the attention of the world and the adhesion of the 'pragmatic politicians' of the upper middle class by virtue of the fact that it was riding on the high horse of Revolution. It did not make any difference that it committed the crime unwittingly. But the time came when it grew horrified at the indecent scene and tried to pull in the horse running at breakneck speed. The result was disastrous for one and deplorable for the other. It was disastrous for the rider, who was thrown off the majestic saddle down the precipice of obscurity; while the sudden frantic cry for halt dazed and puzzled the horse, which as it were, fell into a torpor after the first wild dash, and today runs the risk of being harnessed in the guilded chains of an orderly and constitutional movement, to be driven along the respectable road of Reformism.

This is a temporary setback for the revolutionary forces, which could be so easily dissipated because their subjective counterpart has not developed as yet, thus leaving them at the mercy of opportunist leadership. It is temporary, but none the less deplorable. Now begins a new act of the drama, with the pragmatic politicians of the Extremist school occupying the centre of the stage. Will they make a better show? Certainly not. Middle-class Extremism does not go very far, because it is divorced from the dynamics of revolutionary mass-energy. If the religious nationalists misled and betrayed the masses with reactionary pacifism, the middle-class Extremists are sublimely indifferent to them. They count more upon statics than upon dynamics. Hence the collapse of this type of Extremism is a foregone conclusion. In fact, it is already collapsing. A movement started in opposition to certain tactics which meant an all-round retreat cannot be relied upon for anything spectacular, when all it can promise to do is to execute the self-same retreat in an orderly manner.

It is evident that the opposition led by the Mahratta Party is not in any way inclined towards revolutionary tactics in the place of those of indecision and hesitancy. The Congress programme as formulated at Bardoli and ratified at Delhi is to be revised. This is the demand. But what will be the new programme? The suggestions in this respect are altogether negative. Certain clauses, those opposed by the upper middle class leaders at Nagpur, are to be given up as impractical. Some go so far as to repudiate the whole theory of Non-Co-operation, and adopt the curious doctrine of 'Responsive Co-operation' in its stead. In order to make it somewht distinguishable from the programme of the Liberal Party, it is often called 'Responsive Non-Co-operative' which is still more curious, because it does not mean anything. There is some sense in the theory that we will co-operate with the government under conditions; that is, we will respond to every act of concession by our co-operation. But Non-Co-operation can never be 'responsive'; it can only be retaliatory. These are but word-mongering to conceal the real motive, which is to abandon Non-Co-operation in so far as it affects the upper middle class.

Such is the way of middle-class Extremism. It is a misnomer, because it always avoids going to the extreme. To stand in the centre is its habit. On the one hand, the doors of the Kingdom of Heaven where the upper classes are admitted by the courtesy of the imperial ruler, are closed to it; on the other hand, belonging to the propertied classes, it is opposed to going all the way over to the revolutionary masses. Had the present opposition been any more revolutionary than the leadership which it aspires to replace, it would step in where the latter failed. If the Bardoli Programme is to be revised, it should be done, not in order to go back upon all the activities whose inevitable consequences forced the religious nationalists to show their reactionary colour, but in order to intensify those activities which were stopped by that silly edict called the 'Constructive Programme'. The Bardoli Resolutions were not forced upon the Congress as a natural consequence of the so-called impracticability of the Non-Co-operation Programme; they were adopted by a terrified, bewildered and reactionary leadership, unwilling to proceed on the road of revolution following the logical consequences of a movement much bigger than itself. The errors of Bardoli will not be rectified by the lawyers resuming their practice, nor by entering the Councils on the principle of 'responsive co-operation'.

The errors of Bardoli can only be rectified by casting aside the so-called Constructive Programme as a counter-revolutionary document, and declaring a militant programme of action in its place. The middle-class Extremists have not the least intention of doing so. They want to have the gratification of affixing M. L. C. to their names; they want to resume the lucrative practice in the courts; they want to have their children qualified for government positions. But they are deadly against lifting the more pernicious bans declared from Bardoli. The bans put upon mass-action. The edict prohibiting the hungry and exploited workers and peasants the right to rise in revolt. But let them not forget that they followed on the heels of the orthodox Non-Co-operation leaders so long as the latter held control of the masses. Today they are wisely criticizing the methods of Non-Co-operation, because it has become impotent by cutting itself asunder from the dynamics of mass-upheaval. But neither the talks of practical politics nor the outbursts of vapoury Extremism will avail unless the new leadership boldly repudiates the reactionary character of the Non-Co-operation Movement and steps in where it so miserably failed. But the middle-class Centrists are utterly incapable of taking such a revolutionary step, their wordy Extremism notwithstanding.

So, will the struggle for national liberation remain stuck in the morass of reaction, impotency and hesitation? NO. The days of reactionary religious nationalism are gone. The Centrist Extremism of the middle class has collapsed before it is born. The leadership of the future is left for those ardent and courageous revolutionaries who will undertake the task of organizing the Mass Party—the political party of the Workers and Peasants, the only social element objectively revolutionary and whose interests can never be protected by half-way measures of reform and compromise.*

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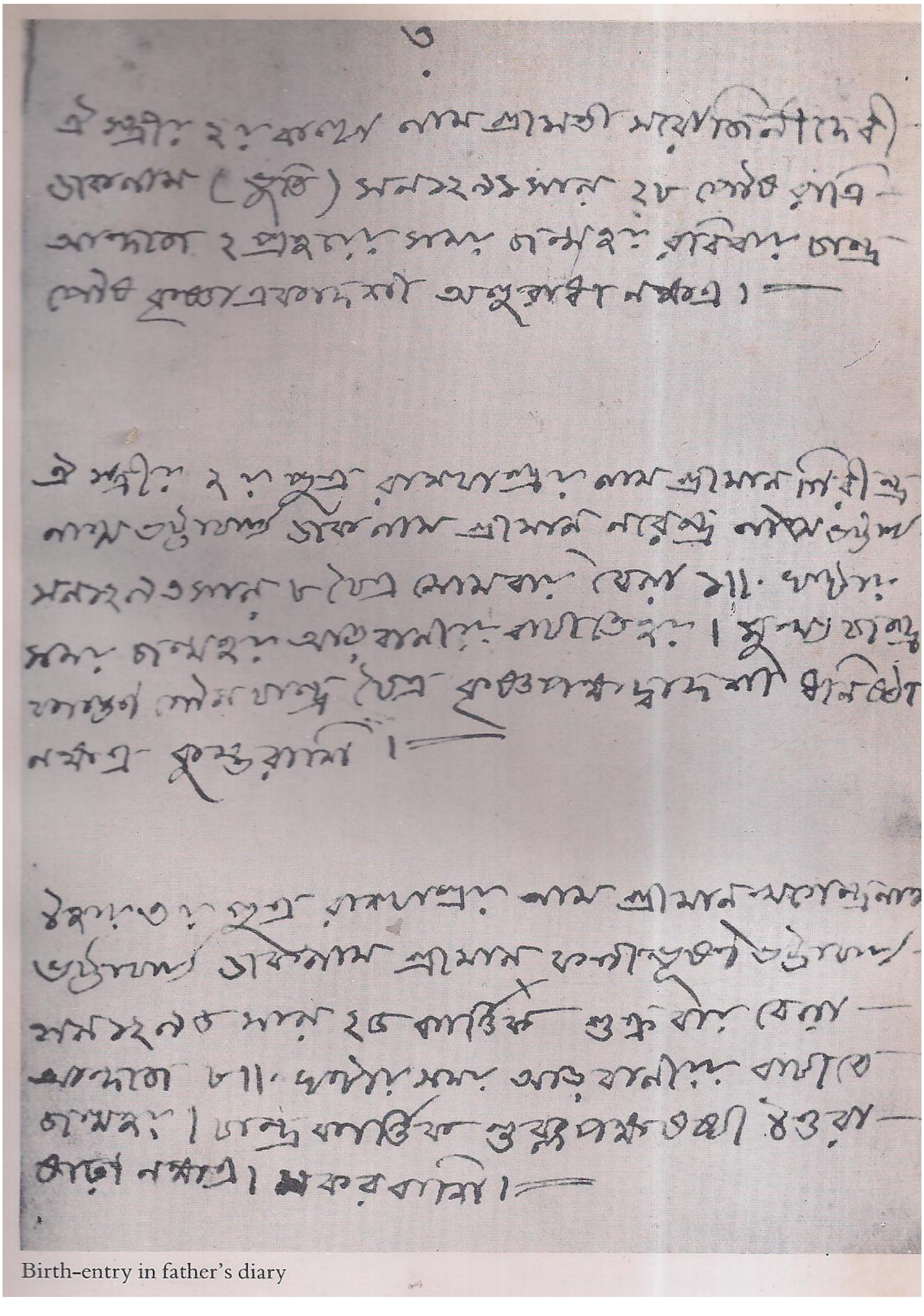
* Vol. I No. 9, 15 September 1922, signed Manabendra Nath Roy.

On 1 February 1922 Gandhi wrote to the Viceroy announcing the start of a 'mass Civil Disobedience' at Bardoli in the Surat district. But on 12 February the Congress Working Committee met at Bardoli, and in view of the violent events at Chauri Chaura and Madras, passed resolutions suspending Civil Disobedience and adopting 'a constructive programme', which included charka and temperance. At the same time the earlier ban on payment of taxes was withdrawn in Guntur. S. N. R.



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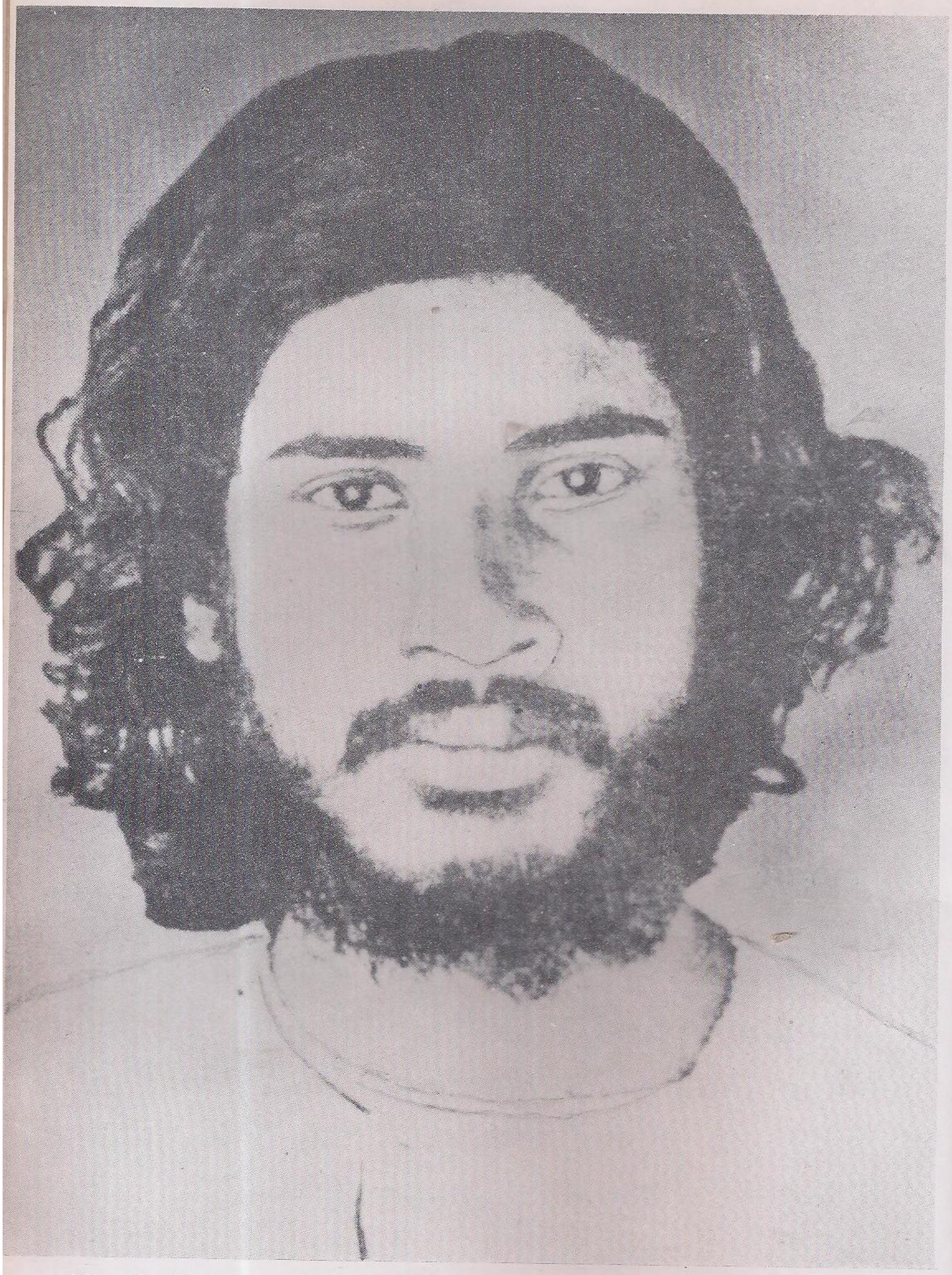
ঐ স্ত্রীর ২য় কন্যা নাম শ্রীমতী সরোজিনী দেবী ডাকনাম ([illegible]) সন ১২৯১ সাল ২৮ পৌষ রাত্রি আন্দাজ ২ প্রহরের সময় জন্ম হয় রবিবার চান্দ্র পৌষ কৃষ্ণপক্ষ একাদশী অনুরাধা নক্ষত্র। —

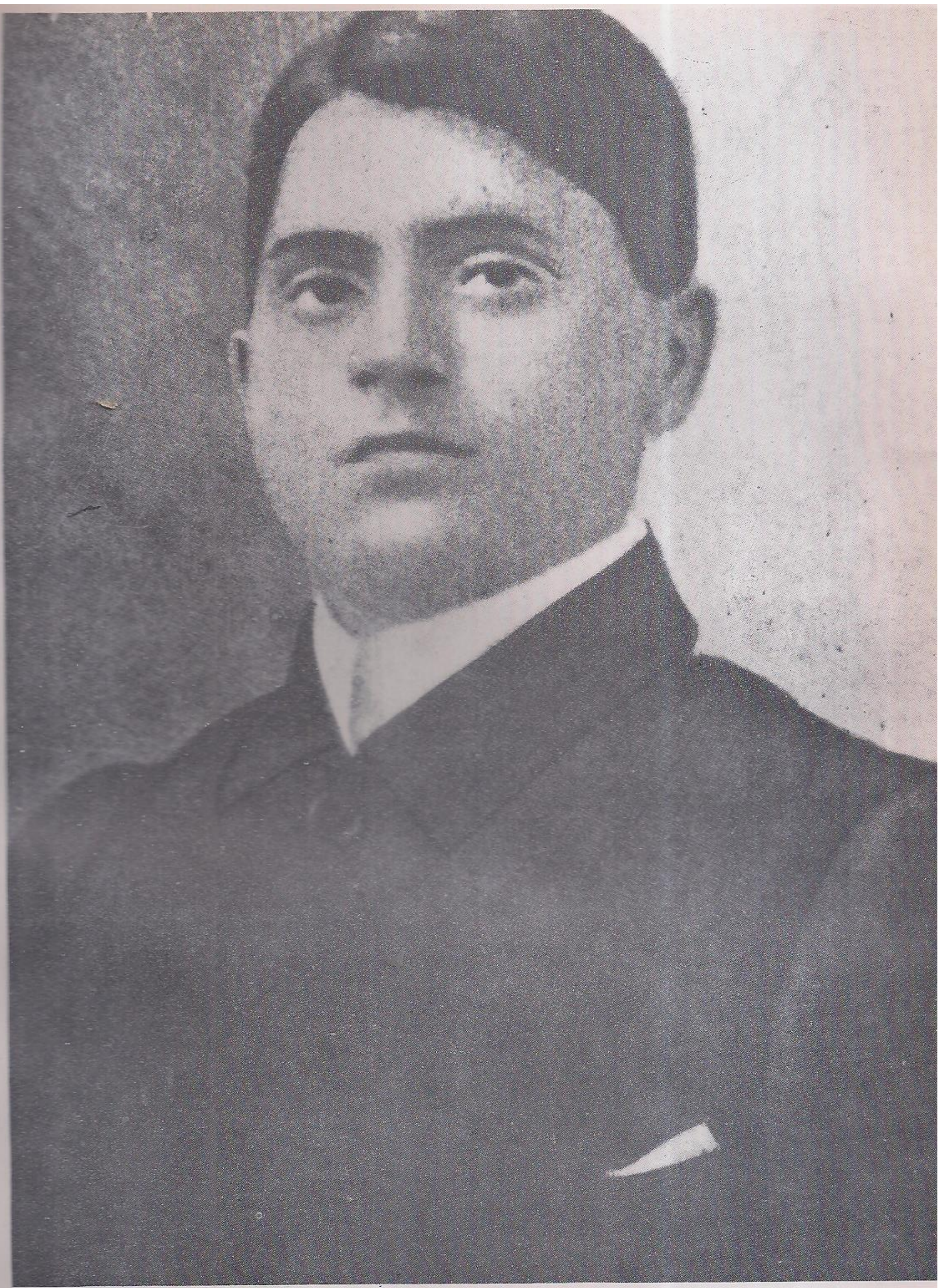
ঐ স্ত্রীর ১ম পুত্র রাশ্যাশ্রয় নাম শ্রীমান গিরীন্দ্র নাথ ভট্টাচার্য্য ডাকনাম শ্রীমান নরেন্দ্র নাথ ভট্টাচার্য্য সন ১২৯৩ সাল ৮ চৈত্র সোমবার বেলা ১১॥০ টার সময় জন্ম হয় আড়বালিয়ার বাটীতে হয়। সূর্য্য চান্দ্র ফাল্গুন শেষ চান্দ্র চৈত্র কৃষ্ণপক্ষ দ্বাদশী ধনিষ্ঠা নক্ষত্র কুম্ভরাশি। —

ঐস্ত্রীর ৩য় পুত্র রাশ্যাশ্রয় নাম শ্রীমান মহেন্দ্রনাথ ভট্টাচার্য্য ডাকনাম শ্রীমান ভবানীভূষণ ভট্টাচার্য্য সন ১২৯৫ সাল ২৫ কার্ত্তিক শুক্রবার বেলা আন্দাজ ৮॥০ টার সময় আড়বালিয়ার বাটীতে জন্মহয়। চান্দ্র কার্ত্তিক শুক্লপক্ষ ষষ্ঠী উত্তরাষাঢ়া নক্ষত্র। মকর রাশি। —

Birth-entry in father's diary



Narendra Nath Bhattacharya in 1910


Jatindra Nath Mukherji in 1914

'Charles A. Martin'

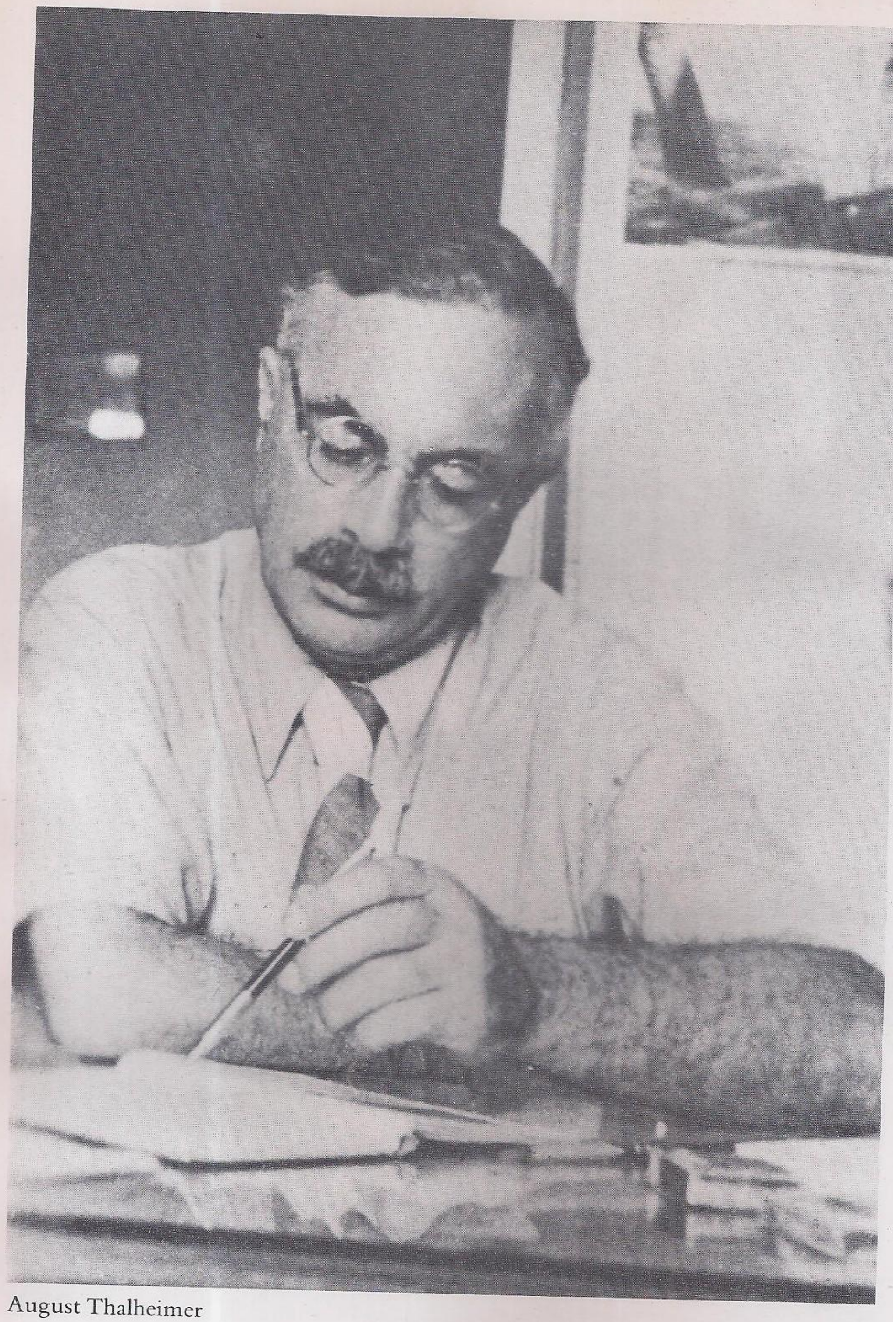
Evelyn Trent at Stanford University in 1915

M. N. Roy in Mexico in 1918

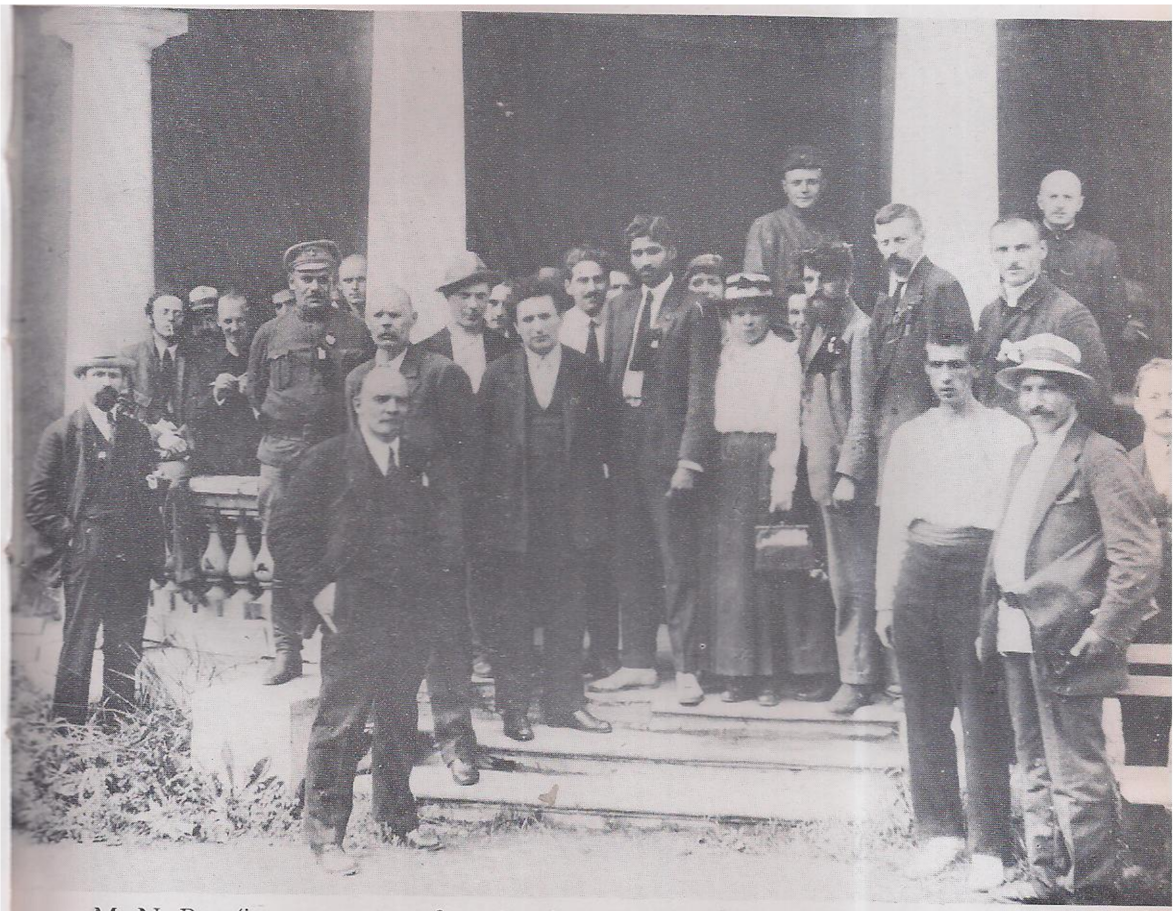
President Venustiano Carranza of Mexico in 1919

Michael Borodin in the 1920s

Rosa Luxemburg

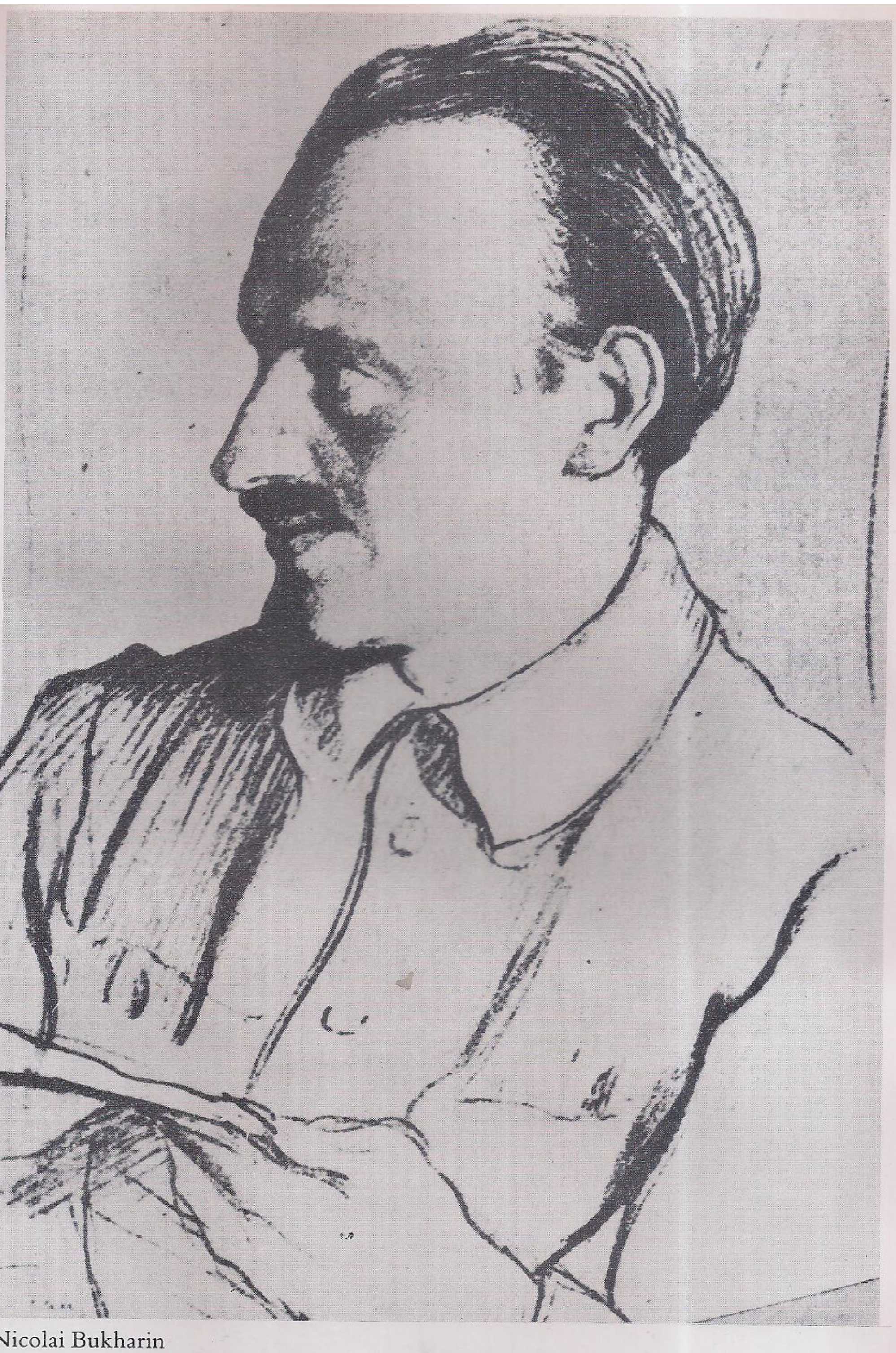


August Thalheimer



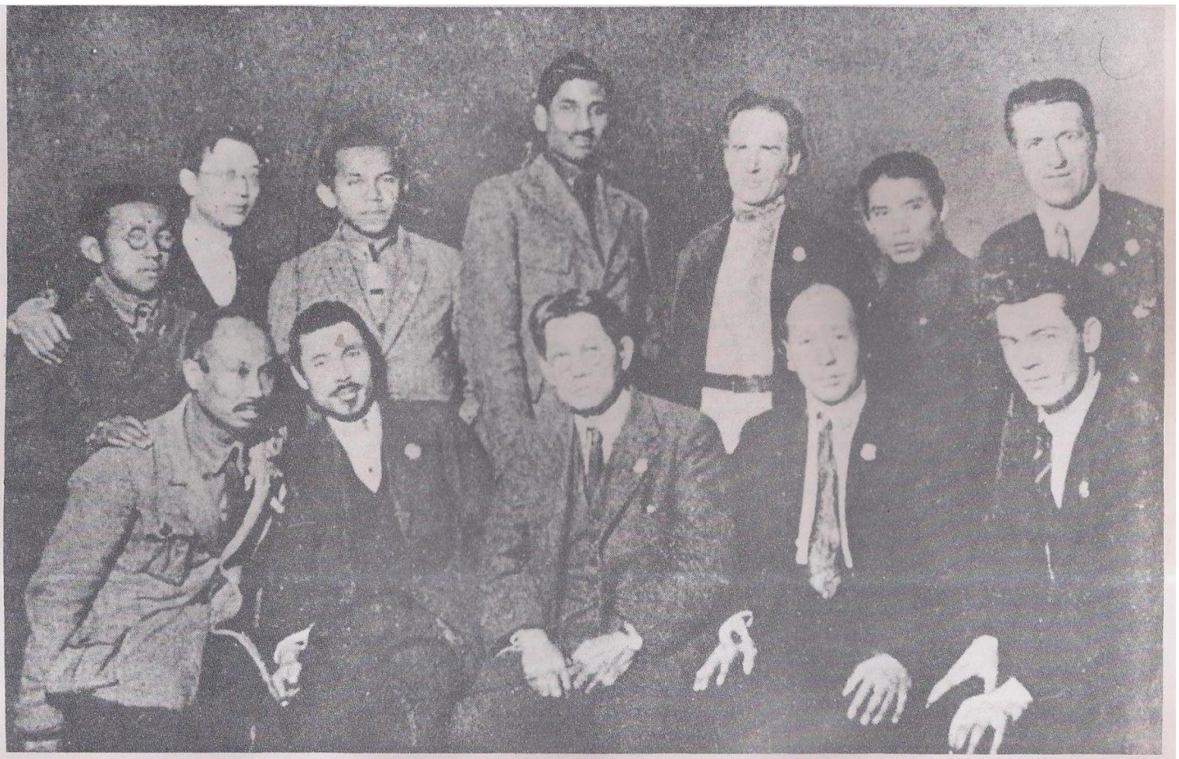
M. N. Roy (in centre at top of steps) at the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920

Angelica Balabanoff



Nicolai Bukharin

regory Zinoviev in 1918



M. N. Roy with Oriental Delegates at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International in 1922

M. N. Roy at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International in 1922

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Wanted a New Party

The Liberals respresenting the propertied upper classes and rich intellectuals went over to the side of the foreign ruler as soon as the latter showed the inclination to pay adequately for their services. The Constitutional Democracy of the Liberals thus ended in compromise and betrayal of the national movement. The Extremists, spokesmen of the middle classes, inaugurated the campaign of Non-Co-operation as a protest against this act of the Moderates. But if the politics of the Moderate-Liberals ended in compromise, that of the Extremist noncooperators have landed the movement on the quagmire of intellectual bankruptcy and sentimental degeneration.

Today the National Congress as a political organization is dead. Its corpse waits either to be buried or resurrected by a new breath of life. From the orthodox non-cooperators nothing better than a ceremonial burial of the Congress can be expected, because the noncooperators have only succeeded in demonstrating their inability and unwillingness to adopt such methods of Non-Co-operation as will push our movement forward. In the hand of our present leaders Non-Co-operation has degenerated from a potential political weapon to a lifeless metaphysical abstraction.

The stampede of the pragmatic politicians towards the camp of the Moderates threatens to leave the Congress without leadership. The country has been eagerly waiting for Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das to come out of jail and take in his hand the reins of the movement. This faith of the non-co-operators in Mr. Das has been demonstrated by his unanimous election to the presidency of the forthcoming annual session of the National Congress. But one cannot but be sorely disappointed with the leadership of Mr. Das if his utterances since he came out of prison are to be taken as indicative of his future action. In vain did we listen to his eloquent speech in answer to the address of the people of Calcutta, for some practical guidance to the floundering ship of Non-Co-operation. He expressed noble and beautiful sentiments which, however, only succeeded in making the confusion reigning in our movement since the beginning of the year, worse confounded. He would not have a Swaraj which was not based on Truth, the nature of which, however, he did not define. But we are given to understand very clearly that this Kingdom of Heaven is to be reached, not through the dirty thoroughfares of politics, economic and social sciences, things branded by the foremost leader of our movement as purely Western inventions. He would have the people of India shun these unholy, material things if they are to follow him to the Swaraj of Truth. Can there be anything more deplorable, nay pitiable, for a people involved in a great struggle for political liberation, to be thrown to the mercy of such leadership? Does it not prove conclusively that if the Moderates deserted the Congress, the Non-Co-operators have killed it? The National Congress signifies to us the vanguard of our national forces fighting for political liberation of the Indian people.

Mr. Das will not have anything but truth as the basis of Swaraj. Very good. We do not know what he means by truth. Is it an abstract conception of the *thing in itself* or *pure reason?* He has not explained it. All the allegorical jewels he fished out of the depths of the Mahabharata did not throw any light on the question. He claimed that from time immemorial, India had been the standard–bearer of Truth. Now, India is neither a geographical expression nor an abstract conception. India is composed of Indians. And the existence of a human community is not an abstract phenomenon: it is a concrete reality. The Truth, which, according to Mr. Das and his school, is supposed to be embodied in Indian nationalism, must therefore depend upon the material existence of its standard-bearer, that is, the people of India. And a material existence is maintained by material means. You cannot feed a nation on moonshine.

But what has Mr. Das to say about the material existence of the Indian people? He knows of the grinding poverty that is eating into their very vitals. But he laughs at those who think that this poverty can be cured by economic means. The idea of the economic development of the Indian people moves our foremost leader to laughter. *The pure idealism* of the Deshbandhu leaves the thoughts of the flesh alone and goes on soaring in the heights of mythological allegories. Meanwhile the people, whom he is to lead, toil and starve. This is what the Non-Co-operation movement has degenerated into.

The utterances of Mr. Das typify the state of confusion and bankruptcy in which our present leadership has landed. Why is it so? Because the orthodox non-co-operators, who are determined to bury the Congress in the abyss of doctrinarian pacifism and metaphysical aberration, stand on an equivocal social background. The Congress has ceased to voice the aspirations of any conscious social class, much less does it stand for the real interest of the nation. The middle classes, which assumed the leadership of the Congress on the debacle of the Liberals, lack the courage and determination to proceed along revolutionary channels. Therefore, they have lost all organic connection with the dynamic forces of mass action which added grandeur and potentiality to the Non-Co-operation movement in its first stages. Divorced from the revolutionary mass energy, the middle class leaders of the non-co-operating Congress stand today in their true character as pillars of reaction. To the right lies the road of social progressiveness, dominated by the upper classes organized in the political party of Constitutional Democracy, the Liberal League. To the left is the high road of revolution, the ventursome journey which can only be undertaken by a revolutionary party of the masses. Unwilling to tread either of these paths, the orthodox non-co-operator can only take refuge in spiritual moralizings which smack of reaction.

We hear Mr. Das utter only one sentence which contains any constructive suggestion. He advices us to organize the villages, leaving the towns alone. He exclaims: the village first, the town afterwards. And what is the essence of this suggestion? A desire to push the nation back into the village, which is the stronghold of reaction, social and economic. The town is the centre of the progressive forces. The lower middle class with its reactionary social philosophy, cannot bid for the leadership of the progressive forces generated by the higher means of production in the urban areas. There the political leadership is contested by the capitalist bourgeoisie on the one hand and the revolutionary proletariat on the other. Neither the capitalist upper class nor the exploited wage-earner can be expected to listen to the voice of social reaction, which is doomed to destruction in the fierce clash of class struggle. All the heritage of spiritual civilization held so precious by the orthodox non-co-operator, is detrimental to the development of the bourgeoisie, which demands the dissolution of the old patriarchal and feudal economy with its root in the village community and caste guilds. Capitalist development requires large masses of wage-earners free to sell their labour-power. These masses of free labourers cannot be accumulated within the reach of capitalist exploitation without undermining the village. On the other hand, the masses of wage-slaves concentrated in towns and industrial centres are freed from the bondage of religious prejudice and social conservatism by the pressure of economic necessity. Therefore, neither of these two classes concentrated in the town, can be expected to stick to the old social customs and traditions, which become an impediment to their progress and welfare in the course of industrial evolution. The capitalist, making huge profits out of industrial enterprises cannot be induced to go back to the antiquated means of production, nor can the expropriated wage-slave be permanently convinced of the virtues of non-violence and spiritual uplift. Therefore the Congress leaders are forced to retire to the village, where the forces of reaction are still living. They think that so long as the social status quo of the village is preserved, their political influence will remain intact.

But even the village is no longer immune from the forces of revolution. The revolt of the exploited and expropriated peasantry is shocking the very foundation of rural life, whose economic aspect, in so far as the craft guilds are concerned, is also being fast undermined by the growth of machine industry in the towns. So even in the village the leadership of the Congress party will not be able to rise to the requirement. There too is needed a revolutionary guidance, which is not to be expected from the conservative and hesitating middle class.

The progressive bourgeoisie, politically represented by the Liberal League, has gone over to the government because their economic interest is best protected by this move. The National Congress embracing the middle classes is on the eve of a split. The upper strata is going back to the fold of the Liberals. Even if they do not say so, the logical consequence of their deed will not be anything else. The lower middle class stick doggedly to the formula of non-violent non-co-operation which has lost all political character. None of these represent, nor can represent, the only revolutionary element of the society, which is the exploited workers and expropriated peasantry. As shown above, the cry, back to the village raised by the lower middle class is essentially reactionary in character. It is not meant for any revolutionary action. On the contrary, it is an important attempt to stay the majestic march of social forces.

The first, that is the landowning class, big capitalist and rich intellectuals, has forfeited all claims to national leadership by its policy of compromise. It cannot do otherwise, because its interests are too intimately intermixed with those of the foreign ruler. The upper middle class will keep on pronouncing formidable phrases in order to maintain a pretence of distinction between themselves and the Liberals. But their true demand will never go so far as to embrace a radical change in the existing political and economic structure. They will develop into full-fledged democratic party, whose programme will advocate such economic readjustment as will give their class a place in the sun. In plain language, wider measures of self-government will transform these stalwarts of Extremism into ardent advocates of orderly progress as their Irish prototypes are doing. The position of the lower middle class is the most pitiable of all. Innate reactionary tendencies will always prevent it from making common cause with the progressive bourgeois liberals; besides, no amount of economic readjustment possible and permissible under the capitalist system, will hold out any substantial amelioration of its bankrupt material condition. On the other hand, it will never have the courage to advocate a revolutionary change of the social system, because any such change will sweep away all those religious and social prejudices cherished by it. Therefore it is clear that the struggle for national liberation cannot be led by any of these elements. In fact, each of them has had its turn, has contributed willingly or unwillingly its respective quota to the struggle, and at last has demonstrated its reluctance or incapability to go farther. So the time has arrived for the rise of a party of the workers and peasants, the only elements essentially revolutionary and not bound down by any interest.

The leadership of the national struggle must be taken over by a mass party consciously representing the interests, immediate as well as ultimate, of the workers and peasants. The growth of such a party will again breathe vigour into the Congress organization, which is lying prostrate today. By mobilizing the revolutionary energy of the toiling masses in battle array, this party will strengthen the position of the middle-class democrats and push them onward in their struggle against the foreign ruler. The capitalist upper class is decidedly hostile to a revolutionary awakening of the working class, and the middle class is too timid, too hesitating to actively court such an awakening. The action of the Congress in the last year has shown it. Therefore what is wanted at the present crisis is a political party of the masses based on the principle of class interest and with a programme advocating mass-action for carrying forward the struggle for national liberation.*

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* Vol. I, No. 1, October, 1922. Second Editorial. S.N.R.

Press Review

The Moslem Jagat (16 August) of Calcutta writes apropos the strike of the boatmen employed by Hoare Miller and Company:

> Strikes take place frequently, but hardly any success is scored by the workers. The people do not give any help to the strikers. The Congress is altogether indifferent to these poor fellows. The other day such a big strike took place in the East India Railway, but not a word was to be heard from the Congress. The latter kept equally silent during the strike of the Indian seamen. The Congress is not saying anything concerning the strike either. Are we to take it that the Congress has nothing to do with the labourers? Is the Congress the property of the so-called upper and middle classes? If such is not the opinion of our leaders, what is the reason of this indifference? The war between the rich and the labouring man is the great problem before the country. To remain unconcerned to this problem does not demonstrate the ability of Congress leadership.

Here is raised the voice of future leadership. We heartily welcome the new contemporary and wish it all success in its mission of making the national movement a movement for the liberation of the labouring masses. In the first number of *The Moslem Jagat* we read several other articles which are equally full of new life, new vigour and new outlook.

Dhumketu (Comet), 11 August. This Bengalee bi-weekly under the able editorship of the militant nationalist poet Kazi Najrul Islam is a valuable addition to the provincial press. We hope that its stirring language will infuse enthusiasm into the national army. The echo of the old *Jugantar* is resounded in the pages of the *Dhumketu*. But we venture to suggest that the days are gone when a clarion call of national heroism was enough. This is the time of action. The desire for freedom is awakened. How to realize the desire is the problem to be solved. We trust our new contemporary will play a prominent part in solving this problem, by using its exceptional gift of literary ability to point out new roads to the revolutionary forces groping in the dark.

The Socialist (Bombay) is the pioneer of the political party which will lead the struggle for national liberation in order to secure real freedom for the masses of the Indian people. Judging from the several numbers that have already reached us the new contemporary has started very well its career, which has a great and glorious future before it. The appearance of *The Socialist* marks the beginning of a new era in our movement. It is the harbinger of the coming revolutionary leadership which is alone capable of guiding our movement to the ultimate goal. The upper class has joined hands with the foreign ruler; the middle classes have more than once betrayed their inability to go very far; so the future belongs to the expropriated masses 'who have nothing to lose, but a world to gain'. With this motto *The Socialist* has begun the new phase of our movement. We wish our contemporary all success.*

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* Vol I, No. 1, 1 October, 1922.

Muslim-Jagat was a Bengali Weekly published from Calcutta in 1922 and edited by Abdur Rashid Siddiqui. *Dhumketu* was the famous Bengali bi-weekly edited by Nazrul Islam; the first issue appeared on 12 August 1922. Its issue of 26 September was proscribed and copies confiscated; Nazrul was arrested on 23 November and in January 1923 he was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment. *The Socialist* was an English weekly started by S.A. Dange in August 1922. S. N. R.

Mass Action

The avowed object of the Non-Co-operation Movement in its political aspect, with which we are concerned, is to make the government impossible by depriving it of all popular support. In order to realize this goal, the weapon of non-co-operation must be wielded by that section of the population which constitutes the productive element of the society. In other words, it is only the non-co-operation of the *workers and peasants* that can paralyse the government and bring about its final collapse.

It is true that the British domination in India is maintained by the Indians themselves and, therefore, as soon as the Indians refuse to lend their support to it the foreign government will fall to pieces. But it is necessary to understand on what class the British domination is essentially based; because if we want to undermine a structure we must first of all discover the foundation. The foundation of British domination is the exploitation of the Indian masses. Why do the British rule India? Why are they so determined to maintain their supremacy at all cost? Because they derive a great profit from exploiting the Indian masses. The profit that the British make out of their domination in India is not produced by the lawyers, doctors, teachers, or students. It is made out of the labour of the workers and peasants. Therefore, true and effective non-co-operation will be that which cuts into this source of profit. That is, if the workers and peasants refuse to produce so that the foreign ruler can (no longer) make huge profits, the existence of the latter will be in danger.

Now let us see whose support and co-operation is really essential to the existence of the British government. There cannot be any doubt that the British rule India in order that the British capitalist class make large profits by exploiting the natural resources and the labour power of the country. Our upper classes are against the British only in so far as the latter want to monopolize the right of exploitation. The foreigner cannot carry on this exploitation without the support of a certain section of the native population. To this extent, the foreign domination is dependent upon the native upper classes. But the actual amount of profit made by the British is not produced by the native upper and middle classes; it is produced by the workers and peasants. So it is only the latter that can cut into the roots of British domination by refusing to produce value for the British capitalist.

The native capitalist class does not produce anything that swells the pocket of the British rulers. On the contrary, it participates in the total amount of wealth produced by the Indian workers and peasants. For example, the landlords do not contribute anything whatsoever to the coffers of the foreign ruler; on the contrary, they eat up a considerable part of the wealth produced by the peasants. This part would be also appropriated by the British capitalist, if there were no Indian landlords. The same thing applies to the merchants and manufacturers, whose co-operation costs the British a portion of the total profit made by exploiting the country and the people. Neither do the intellectuals—the lawyers, doctors, professors, officials, clerks, etc.—produce anything. What they do is to help the British government exploit the people. This position makes them more dependent upon the British than the latter on them. Devoid of any productive value, these social elements cannot maintain an independent existence. They are mere appanages of the system and therefore cannot non-co-operate with it without endangering their own existence. Therefore, it is idle to expect that these elements—the landlords, merchants, manufacturers, intellectuals and students—collectively and severally are capable of paralysing the government by means of non-co-operation. Some of them are not in a position to non-co-operate, because they lose by such non-co-operation; and the non-co-operation of the rest is not enough to paralyse the government which rests on a deeper foundation.

If the lawyers boycott the courts, they are the losers; the government does not lose anything. It is the same with the teachers and students. The experience of the last two years has amply proved it. The boycott of British goods, if carried to any appreciable degree of success, will affect the government by hitting the English textile industry; but, first of all, this boycott cannot be successful without the support of the Indian masses, and secondly its success will benefit the Indian capitalist class and not the workers and peasants. So it is clear that the non-co-operation which can seriously injure the position of the foreign ruler and eventually overthrow him has to be put on much wider a basis than the boycott of councils, courts, schools and even of British goods. *It must be based on the refusal of the producing class to produce profit for the British capitalist*. In other words, non-co-operation can be made effective only by the revolutionary action of the workers and peasants, by means of mass strikes led by the class-conscious vanguard, on the principle of class struggle and for the interests of their class.

To prepare for this sweeping mass-action, to mobilize the forces with a view to deal deadly blows to the government by means of mass strikes, is the task of all those who want to lead the movement for national liberation forward. The Congress leaders also declare their intention to prepare an atmosphere suitable for Civil Disobedience; but the way by which they expect to do it is mistaken. And we have every reason to believe that this is a wilful mistake. Our leaders do not want to follow the course of revolutionary action. Otherwise, how can we explain the policy of stopping all revolutionary activities just at the time when the masses demonstrated in repeated instances their readiness to follow the lead of the Congress? Now our leaders decry any suggestion of mass action on the ground that the country is not ready for it. And they have given us the *Charka* and *Khaddar* to play with. But these are not the *means* by which the subsiding mass-enthusiasm can be kept up and the people led into action.

If we seriously intend to inaugurate a campaign of mass Civil Disobedience (which is the only potent weapon available under the present circumstances) at the earliest opportunity, it is necessary at once to clarify our idea about this step. It is evident from all appearances that the Congress leaders entertain a very limited view of the question. If they ever go to the extent of declaring Civil Disobedience they will do so as a legal issue. It will be a call to disobey certain legislations. But this will not be the Civil Disobedience which can paralyse the government. We must learn from experience. Non-co-operation failed to realize its end because it was not applied on a comprehensive scale. The mistake should not be repeated. The widest possible masses of the population must be involved in the campaign of Civil Disobedience, if it is to attain its object of paralysing the government. In other words, Civil Disobedience should not be passive resistance to certain laws held to be 'unjust' by the Congress leaders, but a *militant action of the masses*. If it is the first that the Congress is working for, then it will have to keep on working till eternity, because a 'suitable atmosphere' for it will never be created; you cannot tune up the whole nation to a mood of martyrdom. But the objective conditions are ready if Civil Disobedience is to follow the second course—that of militant mass-action.

Eighty per cent of our people are in such a condition that it hardly can be any worse. Signs are not lacking that their traditional patience has reached the point of exhaustion. Consequently it is sure that any struggle begun with the expressed purpose of improving the present unbearable life of the working and peasant masses will enlist their support. This being the case, the slogan of Civil Disobedience will be caught by the masses of the people, if it is launched as a call to rebel against their intolerable condition of life. It is very well-known how ready are the workers to strike on any conceivable pretext. Why? They do not strike simply for fancy; but because their patience is exhausted and they are ready to fight for a better life. The same is the case with the peasant masses, who are only too eager to catch at any call for non-payment of rents and taxes. This has been more than amply demonstrated during the last two years.

So, it is clear that the masses of our people are ready for action; what is lacking is a leadership free from class limitations, and inspired with a revolutionary vision. The future development of our movement depends upon the appearance of a party endowed with this much-needed leadership, which will know how the economic struggle of the workers and peasants can be organized so as to develop it into a revolutionary political fight. Let us not forget that a fairly well-organized and sustained strike in any of the great industries inflicts more harm on the government and the capitalist class behind it, than all the effects of the Triple Boycott taken together. By leading the workers in such local strikes will the revolutionary mass-party win their confidence and thus steadily advance, preparing the ground for one or a series of great country-wide general strikes which will be the best and most effective form of Civil Disobedience.

The work among the city proletariat and the peasants must go hand in hand. Our activities in the village should be equally revolutionary. We must work, not to teach the exploited tenant self-help, but self-assertion. No amount of reformist activities can ameliorate the bankrupt position of our peasantry. Nothing less than a radical change will do. Therefore we must work in that direction. Our object will *be to create discontent everywhere against the present system, and intensify it wherever it exists.* Mass strikes and demonstrations should be organized at every available opportunity to give vent to this growing discontent. We should not expect that every strike will end in a victory for the workers; that every demand of the peasantry will be granted by the government or landlord. There will be defeats in so far as the economic aspects of the struggle are concerned; but every strike, every demonstration will awaken the consciousness of the masses, will strengthen their revolutionary determination. This is the only way of creating an atmosphere suitable for Civil Disobedience. But it can be done only by a party of the masses—a party that will stand for the interests of the toiling masses and will provide them with that revolutionary leadership which, steeled in the every-day fight, will not stop till the final victory is won.*

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* Vol. I, No. 2, 15 October 1922 Editorial. S.N.R.

What is a Programme?

By Manabendra Nath Roy

Every movement leads somewhere. When it is political, it heads towards the establishment of political institutions that are different from the prevailing ones. If it is social, it is actuated by and embodies forces that disrupt the old and make for new social relations. An economic movement promises change in the present economic structure. A great revolutionary national movement like ours includes all the three factors viz., political, social and economic.

Every revolutionary movement is led by a Party which is composed of those who articulate the purpose and desire of the multitude involved in this movement. The Party is the subjective expression of the objective forces contained in the movement. The Party expresses through its programme the principles it stands for. Since the Party is the political organ of the multitude, the principles it advocates through its programme must be in consonance with the objective forces impelling the multitude in the movement. Hence the formulation of its programme is the first task of any Party, because on its ability to adopt such a programme as will reflect the objective forces embodied in the movement, depends the success or failure of its leadership. If its programme embraces the political, economic and social readjustments required for the progress of the multitude involved in the movement, the party will gather under its banner larger and larger number of adherents to the cause it stands for.

Now, there must be a party to lead our movement. And this party must begin its mission with the publication of its programme. But here we are confronted with the most complicated problem which has so far stood in the way of the crystallization of a great political party based on clearly defined social interests. This problem has to be solved before we can go further ahead; and its solution demands a deep understanding of the movement, as well as the boldness to act according to this understanding.

The Congress is a Political Party, since it wants to lead the movement for national liberation. Its mission is to rally under its banner all the forces that will contribute to the realization of its object viz., the freedom of the Indian people. In order to do this, the Congress must have a programme which will set forth in concrete terms the principles it stands for. This must be done to prove that the Congress Party is really the subjective expression of the objective forces which have brought about and are pulsating in the movement. It is generally understood that we require national freedom in order that the present miserable condition of the Indian people may be changed. In short, what is needed is an all-round change. Now, except a handful at the top, every Indian lives in a condition not by any means enviable, which can hardly be called human. Some are dissatisfied; but the great bulk are not. They are callous. They are resigned to their fate. They do not struggle to improve their condition. But they will welcome any prospect of such improvement, provided this prospect is presented to them in terms which do not exceed the limited scope of their understanding. The Congress Party, which is composed of those articulating the national discontent, must state in its programme what will be the condition of the people under a national government. It must point out how the present condition will be improved. The Congress Programme should not only be a statement of the theory of National Liberation, but it should also include principles and projects of National Reconstruction. Without a clear programme of National Reconstruction, the Congress will never succeed in playing the role of a political party, because the growing discontent of the people which is the motive force of the present revolutionary movement, is not a Thing-in-Itself. It generates a movement heading towards the establishment of different political institutions, a change of economic conditions and the inauguration of new social relations. A political party, in order to deserve the name and to be able to execute its mission successfully, must demonstrate that it is the articulate embodiment of these objective tendencies making for a new order of things. Its programme contains such a demonstration.

It may be said, and it is said up till now, that our goal is clear enough—it does not need explanation; we want Swaraj, which will put an end to all our sufferings and miseries. But this is no programme, it is mere dogmatic assertion. It does not in any way inspire confidence or enthusiasm. We want to overthrow foreign rule because it is harmful to our national welfare; because it has caused us all sorts of sufferings, because under the present conditions we cannot get all that we need. We, the vanguard of the Indian people, are not satisfied with the present state of affairs. Organized in various political parties, we call upon the inarticulate, but none the less oppressed and exploited multitude to follow us in the struggle for national emancipation. We promise them *happiness* under Swaraj.

What do the masses of our people need to be happier than at present? If we know what they lack, then we will be able to estimate their wants. The masses of the Indian people are poor, exploited. They are poor, not because they have been made so by some preordained law. They are poor, they starve, because they are exploited.

There are millions of toilers in our country who never get one full meal a day, who are perpetually living on the verge of starvation. There are thousands and thousands of men, women and children living like dogs in dirty holes in the great cities. But in those very great cities there are magnificent mansions occupied only by a few. These houses are built by the workers. Every brick has been laid by the workers, whose labour has raised these proud structures by putting one stone upon another. Their mothers, wives and daughters carry piles of bricks and jars of water on their heads, stooped with exhaustion. The comfortable beds, tables, chairs, carpets and other furnitures that adorn these palaces are also manufactured by the workers. But the people who build these comfortable houses, cannot live in them. They have to crawl in dingy huts after the day's hard labour, performed often on an almost empty stomach. So, this is the condition in which the great majority of our people live. The poor peasantry do not live any better. This is the fundamental thing which has to be changed if the people are to be any happier under Swaraj. If the Congress Programme does not include a challenge to the system perpetuating this state of affairs, it will fail to attract the masses. It will fail because the objective causes of the movement will not be reflected in it. The people want enough to eat, a decent place to live and a clean bed to sleep in after the day's labour; they need clothes to protect them from the sun, rains and cold; they would like to have their children educated. They will struggle for these things. Therefore they will actively take part in the movement for national liberation, if such liberation promises to secure for them these things. The *programme of a party desiring to lead the people in the struggle for national emancipation must include the principle which will determine the socio-economic relations under Swaraj*. The programme of the Congress Party must reflect the aspirations and desires of that section of the Indian people which is not and cannot be satisfied with the present conditions.

To return to the problem that has to be solved before the Congress can become a cohesive political party and adopt a clear programme. If our leaders have not gone beyond reciting the theory of national liberation and have given rather an exaggerated importance to unity, which in reality, however, does not exist, it is because they are actuated by *class interests*. They may not all be conscious of this class affiliation; but it is there. And it is the conflict of class interest that has prevented the Congress from formulating a clear programme. But the problem can no longer be avoided. It must be solved.

First of all, it is very well to say that national freedom is helpful to the interests of all. But is it really so for practical purposes? What community of interest is there between the landlord and his tenant? How to reconcile the interests of the capitalist and the wage-earner?

In short, how to overlook the unbridgeable gulf that separates the propertied upper classes from the expropriated lower classes? All of these elements that constitute the Indian people may have their respective grievances against the British government, but the things they aspire for are not only not identical, *but are irreconcilably conflicting*. Therefore, it is but an illusion to expect that all these elements, simply because they have their own particular grievances against the foreign ruler, can be harnessed to a united party actuated only by the ideal of national emancipation. Yes, there can be, there must be, concerted effort made by all these elements but this will not be the effort of a *party*. It will be the joint action of *several parties* making a working agreement for a specific task. If the Congress proposes to be but a combination of several parties, it has failed in its attempt. In fact, it has ceased to expect this. The idea of a common platform, a forum of independent opinion, proved itself untenable by the split brought about as a result of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. Why did the Moderates leave the Congress? Because the Reforms satisfied at least temporarily, the aspiration of the class they represented. The old Congress was a very loosely formed body; nevertheless it served the purpose of a political party of the landlords and big capitalists. A glance at its resolutions is enough to dispel any doubt whatsoever in this respect. What did the old Congress stand for? Administrative Reforms, Fiscal Autonomy, Protection to native industries—these were the fundamental principles advocated. Who were to be benefited by the granting of such concessions? The intellectuals and the propertied upper class. Enlarged scope would be given to the intellectuals by opening the higher government positions to them. Development of native industries under Protection would benefit those with capital to be invested. The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms promised these classes a place in the sun. Consequently their opposition was turned into Co-operation.

Now, what applies to one class, is equally applicable to the rest. If the upper class has its own particular interest, the middle class has its interests too. And the interests of the working classes are distinct from both of them. Political parties are formed according to the development of these interests, and the programme of each political party sets forth the principle defending the interests of the class it represents. The old Congress was conscious of its social background. Excepting some confusion about its relation with the landed aristocracy, a confusion which is being clarified in the course of events, the old Congress represented the rich intellectual and propertied bourgeoisie. Therefore, its programme advocated principles calculated to further the progress of this class within the limits of the circumstances obtaining then. But the debacle of the Old Guard delivered the Congress over to the control of elements belonging to the lower middle class, which came to power by the objective pressure of mass-energy, but which by sentiment and traditions, was not much closer to the common people than was their predecessor.

Thus the Congress promised to become the political party of the lower middle class, which has been proved by history to be always hesitating, confused and timid. The middle class is such because it stands upon a social background always shifting, insecure. This explains the failure of the Congress to formulate a programme even in those stirring days when the Non-Co-operation Movement could count upon the active support of the masses. The launching of a programme containing a clear statement of the social ideals it stood for, would make the Congress commit itself on one side or the other. It must declare itself to be either a political party of the *lower middle class*, striving for political and economic changes calculated to improve the condition of this class; or a political party of *the masses*, advocating such revolutionary measures as would seriously affect the present system of society based upon the right of exploitation of man by man. As the confused socio-political outlook of the non-co-operators would not permit them to take such a definite position, it was impossible for them to organize a cohesive political party with a definite programme.*

(to be continued)

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* Vol. I, No. 2, 15 October 1922, signed Manabendra Nath Roy, published in four successive instalments starting with this issue. S.N.R.

What is a Programme? (Part II)

By Manabendra Nath Roy

A Political Party must be the standard-bearer of one social class. The same party cannot represent the interests of two or more classes. Because what is good for one may not be good for the other. The debacle of the Moderates has proved the hypocrisy, utter meaninglessness, of the theory of national representation. Since the inauguration of the National Congress, the rich intellectuals and propertied upper class assembled in it, claimed to be the mouthpiece of the entire nation. Just like the present Congress, they pretended to stand for the welfare of the Indian people as a whole. But their subsequent behaviour has given the lie to this pretension. It has been proved unmistakably that by *national welfare* they meant the welfare of the *particular class* they belonged to. They still claim to be the leaders of the Indian people, who are to march in their wake on the road of progressive Self-government. Or in other words, the Liberals want *Self-government*, by which is meant *the government of their class for the benefit of their class*. All their talk about democracy, representative government, national welfare and so forth does not alter this fundamental fact.

The present Congress likewise has to be a political party of one particular class. It is quite possible, in fact it will be necessary for it to cooperate with other parties in the struggle against foreign domination. But it must co-operate *as a party*, with its own programme formulated in accordance with its social background. The Congress cannot reflect the political, economic and social aspirations of more than one class and be a cohesive political party at the same time. And until and unless it assumes the character of a cohesive political party, it will not get out of the present confusion and indecision, and consequently all its efforts to lead ahead the movement for national liberation will amount to nothing. The people must be led and led somewhere. An abstract ideal is not enough. There must be definite aims to be attained. Now, the aims of the various classes into which human society, and for that matter, Indian society is divided, are not identical. The aim of the Moderates was not the same as that of the Extremists. So the aim of the Extremists or the non-co-operators cannot be expected to be the same as that of the common people. The overthrow of foreign rule is not a question of abstract ethics, nor is it a juridical conception. Swaraj is not a metaphysical state. It is not a *thing-in-itself*. We want to overthrow the foreign yoke because it stands on our way to a certain goal. We want Swaraj because it will enable us to get many things that are not available under the present circumstances. Had national liberation been an abstract ideal—a *thing-in-itself*—then the question would be otherwise. But it is not so. Every Indian, landlord, capitalist, merchant, intellectual peasant and worker, wants Swaraj not for *Swaraj itself*, but because it will enable them to *get to enjoy and to realize something* they cannot under foreign domination. This being the case, all strive for Swaraj, but each for his own object; and the interests of these different classes are not only not the same, but are conflicting, hostile. Therefore, all the classes looking upon foreign rule as a hindrance to their economic progress, will take part in the struggle for national liberation, but must do so organized in their own parties, striving for aims calculated to be beneficial to their respective classes. The recent growth of various political parties in India bears out this statement.

The landlords have their party. The aim of this party is to defend the right of landlordism. Any encroachment upon the privileges of the landowning aristocracy is resisted by this party. The 'loyalty' or otherwise of this party is determined by the interests of the class it represents. Since landlordism is protected by the British government, the Landowners' Association is remarkable for its loyalty. If, among the smaller landholding class, a certain amount of discontent is to be noticed, it is not fomented by any national idealism. It is produced by the exactions of the State. So if there are landlords with nationalist sentiments, willing to help the movement for national liberation, they do so actuated by their class interest. They think that their rights and privileges will be more secure under a national government than they are now. A party of such landlords will have a programme declaring the right of landlordism to be sacred, inviolable and the bedrock of our society.

The Liberal Party, Progressive Party, National Party, Democratic Party are all parties of the capitalists and rich intellectuals. The development of national capitalism is the aim of all these parties. Their hostility to British rule goes so far as the latter stands in the way of their economic development. And their economic development is dependent upon their right to exploit unrestrictedly the labour-power and natural resources of the country. By putting all kinds of restrictions upon the native industries, the monopoly of British capitalism is maintained in India. The Indian middle class wants to break this imperial monopoly by asserting the right of national capital to exploit the national labour. In order to succeed in the competition against its imperial rival, the native capitalist class wants to avail itself of the *National State*, which will help it to exact from the working class the maximum amount of labour-power in return for the minimum wages.

The above programme, however, do not correspond to the needs of the workers and peasants who constitute the majority of the people. What do *they* want? What are their grievances? What do they expect on the attainment of Swaraj? The peasantry is exploited by the landlords under the protection of the government or by the government directly. The grievances of the peasantry, potential or expressed, are not against the person or institution exercising the right of exploitation. They are against the *order of society* or *system of government* which permits or is established upon such right of exploitation. It does not make any difference to the peasant *who* extracts the rent; what concerns him vitally is *the amount exacted*. So, *what is needed for the welfare* of the peasantry is a change of the present system of rack-renting, carried on either by the native landlord or by the foreign government. A party whose programme will include such principles of agrarian revolution will be the party of the poor peasantry. It is such a party that is alone capable of rallying under its banner the exploited peasant masses and of leading them in the struggle for national liberation, which may be fought in co-operation with other classes having irreconcilable conflict of interests with the foreign ruler. *But it is impossible to unite the landlords and peasants in the same political party organized on the theory of a common national interest*. What is needed for the welfare of the peasantry cannot be realized without encroaching upon the rights of the landlord. And the latter's privileged position cannot be maintained unimpaired, without forcibly perpetuating the present property relations in all their essential features.

It is likewise with the city workers. What is good for them is the contrary to the employer. The interests of both cannot be the same, because the employer gets rich at the expense of the workers. The former cannot make profit unless the latter is deprived of a part of what he produces. Since the object of all capitalist industry, trade and commerce is to make the biggest possible profit, the workers employed by the owners of such concerns will be always exploited. The nationality of the owner will not make any difference. On the other hand, what is needed for the interests of the working class is bound to be detrimental to the capitalist employer, because the latter thrives by depriving the former of a considerable part of what he produces. Therefore, *a party of the employing class cannot stand for the interests of the workers, just as the Landowners' Association cannot be the guardian of the interests of the exploited peasantry*. A party whose programme will advocate a radical change in the existing system of wage-slavery, will be the party of the working class. The interests of the propertied class, landlords and capitalists, cannot be reconciled with those of the exploited workers and rack-rented peasantry within the self-same political party bearing the magic name of national unity, because such interests are fundamentally conflicting.

Political parties are thus formed to express and defend the interests of the various social classes. The programme of each party bears the stamp of the class it represents. A political party is of no importance without a programme; because in that case it cannot count upon the conscious support of any social element. Those who believe that by avoiding the formulation of a definite programme a movement can be made immune from the effects of conflicting class interests are mistaken. If the Congress is to be a political party, it has to base itself on one or another of the three principal classes into which the present Indian society is divided. *It must either be the party of he landlords or of the propertied upper and middle classes or of the exploited workers and peasants.* Its programme will show which class it represents. No abstract formulae nor the theory of national unity based on class collaboration will obscure the issue for any length of time.

A programme is the standard of a political party, and any party which wants to have a following must have a programme, which will declare clearly and definitely what it is striving for.*

(To be continued)

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* Vol. I, No. 3, 1 November 1922. S.N.R.

What is a Programme? (Part III)

By Manabendra Nath Roy

A New Party

The pronounced object of the Indian National Congress is Swaraj or Self-Government. This objective receives a different definition in the hands of the different elements of the people that take part in the national movement. The Congress strives to rally the *entire nation* with the cry for Swaraj. But, since the nation is not a homogeneous whole, being in reality divided into classes with diverse and conflicting interests, such cohesive union is not possible. In other words, *the Congress cannot be the one and united political party of the entire Indian people.* The desire to assume this impossible role has so long prevented the non-co-operating Congress from adopting a definite programme. In the earlier days the Congress, in name national, was the organ of the upper and middle classes. Therefore it had a definite programme advocating such economic and political changes as would improve the conditions of these classes. Since the upper class was won over to the side of the government by means of the Reforms, the Congress has been left in the control of the middle class which inaugurated the Non-Co-operation movement, supported by the awakening masses. The very fact that the upper and middle classes could not remain united forever within the folds of the Congress proved that the latter's proposition of uniting all classes in one united national movement was untenable.

The Non-Co-operation Movement was started by the co-operation of two social elements viz., the middle classes, betrayed and deserted by the Moderates, and the worker and peasant masses, moved into revolutionary action under the pressure of economic exploitation. The programme of the Non-Co-operation Movement was, however, based upon the interests of the former. The demands of the masses, who played such an active and important role in the movement of the last three years, received very little consideration. Why? *Because the Extremist Party, which raised the standard of revolt against the Reforms, is essentially a middle class party defending the interests of the class.* It revolted against the Reforms because they made very little provision for the middle classes. The interests of the big capitalists and rich intellectuals are not identical with those of the small traders, petty intellectuals, famished clerks and unemployable host of students, the elements that go into the composition of the Extremist Party which inaugurated and led the Non-Co-operation movement. The latter in its turn has, however, very little in common with the toiling masses. Therefore, as so many years within the same Congress organization could not reconcile the interests of the upper and middle classes, so participation in the non-co-operation campaign did not eliminate the difference between the latter and the masses. But the middle class could not do without the support of the masses. It was not yet developed enough economically and politically to have an independent party of its own. It had to secure the following of the masses in order to carry on its campaign of wrecking the Reforms that left it in the lurch. Hence the ambiguity of its programme. A programme categorically advocating the interests of the middle class would not appeal to the awakening masses, whereas a programme defending the interests of the workers and peasants was not to be expected from the middle class democrats or religious nationalists. But the state of affairs cannot continue very long. The political movement for national liberation cannot be carried on without parties; and these parties cannot be formed except on the basis of *class interests*. The process of this clarification of political grouping according to social affiliation is responsible for the present decomposition of the Congress, which is being forced to abandon its ambiguous position and assume the character of a cohesive political party defending the interests of the middle class. *The Congress is destined to be a National Democratic Party representing the small property owners as against the Liberals, who are the spokesmen of big industry and large property*. Consequently the former has no more claim to be the defenders of the interests of the entire nation than the latter, both being the standard-bearers of particular classes, struggling for their respective interests.

Now we will see how the several parties already existing represent particular classes, and how none of them can and will defend the interests of the nation as a whole.

First, we have the Landowners' Association. What does it stand for? A glance at the constitution and the speeches of its members answer this question at once. It defends the interests of the landed aristocracy. Its programme sets forth unequivocally what the Association is striving for. It is the maintainance of the right of landlordism, the privilege of rack-renting the peasantry. It seeks the special protection of the State to exercise these rights. It stands for the preservation of the Permanent Settlement and Zemindary System wherever they obtain, and even the extension of these systems all over the country. The growing discontent and signs of rebellion among the peasantry are forcing the landowning class to take its stand in a compact rank in the defence of its right, which is positively injurious to the interests of the peasant masses. The recent pronouncements made in the Conferences of the Landowners' Association go to show that the landed aristocracy knows its interests very well and is determined to defend these feudal privileges by all means. Since the existence of this class is convenient to the foreign ruler, loyalism is the cornerstone of the programme of the landowners' party. It is, therefore, a reactionary factor in an economic as well as a political sense, since it stands for the preservation of the present order under the protection of foreign domination. This class will be hostile to any movement threatening the privilege it enjoys today. On the other hand, a national movement, whose success does not promise a radical cure for the excesses of the present system of landlordism, will not gather under its banner all the progressive forces of the society.

Then comes the Liberal League. It is the political party of the big capitalists and rich intellectuals. Its programme does not leave any doubt whatsoever as to the class it represents. Protection to native industry, Fiscal autonomy to exercise this protection, Indianization of the Public Services, Local Self-government,—these are the main points in the programme of the Liberal League. Who will be benefited by the realization of this programme? *Those with capital to invest in industrial and commercial enterprises, which thrive within tariff barriers, and the rich intellectuals economically in a position to educate their children for the higher government positions, when these will be available.* So it is clear whose interests are defended by the Liberal League, which pretends to be the representative of the nation. The aspirations of these elements are not altogether unattainable, at least partially, within the limits of foreign domination; therefore their nationalism does not go farther than that 'constitutional' democracy, which means the transfer of administrative power gradually to the native bourgeoisie. Consequently, their slogans are: 'advance by stages', 'compromise', 'orderly progress' and the like.

The Reforms Act has satisfied their demands temporarily; thus we find them co-operating with the foreign government, whose existence however, is 'unnatural' according to their political philosophy. There is another reason for this politics of compromise. The development of trade and commerce, which is the main clause in the programme of the Liberals, demands peaceful and settled conditions. A sudden political change may disturb this. Therefore the native bourgeoisie will compromise with the foreign rulers if the latter do not altogether obstruct its economic development. The Reforms Act has put an end to the era of such obstruction. Consequently, *the same people who started the agitation for national liberation*, have gone over to the side of the foreign ruler, because it suits the immediate convenience of their class.

The Moderates want industrial development of the country, but they are against the boycott of foreign goods. Why? Because many big capitalists are engaged in commerce which will be injured by boycott. But as soon as industrial capital will be more powerful than that employed in commerce, the same Moderates will change their programme. They are for Swadeshi, but against Khaddar. There is also the same economic reason. Increased use of Swadeshi cloth will give a stimulus to the indigenous textile industry, whereas Khaddar propaganda strives to revive the craft industry which is killed by the evolution of machine-production. The moderates do not dislike the idea of throwing the British competitor out of the Indian market, but they know that it can be done better by developing the machine industry than by reverting to the craft production which is doomed to destruction by the invention of machinery. So it is clear that considerations of the economic interests of the upper class determine the political programme and tactics of the Liberal League. No thought of the welfare of the people in general goes into it. In other words, the Self-government or Constitutional Democracy demanded by the Liberals is meant to advance the interests of the particular class represented by them.

The same is equally true of the Extremists. They also represent a certain section of the people. In spite of all the talk about national unity, and the careful avoiding of the adoption of a definite programme, the Extremists or the non-co-operators do not represent the entire nation any more than do the Liberals. They are the mouthpiece of the middle class. The non-co-operating Congress is the political organ of this social element.

Since the Moderates, representing the upper classes, together with the landlords were bought over by the concessions made by the Reforms Act, the Congress has become the political organization of the middle classes. This was so in consequence of the logic of social economics. The Reforms satisfied, at least temporarily, the ambitions of the upper classes. The most galling disabilities imposed upon the development of native capital were removed; at least promises were given to this effect. Imperial capital, forced by the necessities created by the changed world situation, showed an inclination of conceding the Indian investor a junior partnership in the industrial exploitation of the country. Accommodation was made for the upper strata of the intellectuals in the higher grades of the public services. *But none of these reforms affected in any way the economic position of the middle classes,* which expressed their determination to wreck the reforms by the non-co-operation propaganda. The prospective aggrandizement of the rich intellectuals did not offer any amelioration to those struggling to earn a living in the lower grades of the liberal professions.

No prospect was held out to the thousands and thousands of students of middle class origin with a positively dark future before them. The limited franchise left the lower middle class without any political right. While the Congress was still under the control of the Moderates, the standard of Extremism was raised by the exponents of these elements whose welfare required a much more comprehensive change than advocated by the programme of the Congress under upper class leadership. On the debacle of the latter, which could be seduced by a pretence of constitutional democracy and a prospect of industrial development, the middle class Extremists imposed their political ideology upon the Congress, which thus became the political organ of their class. In short, there was a split in the ranks of the old Indian National Congress, giving birth to two distinct political parties. These still continue to claim a national character, but in fact they each represent the interests of particular social classes. The interest of the vast majority of the people is neither represented by any nor by both taken together.*

(To be continued)

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What is a Programme? (Part III)

By Manabendra Nath Roy

A New Party

In the earlier days of the Non-Co-operation movement its class character was somewhat diffuse, because it was intermixed with a great mass upheaval which was the power behind it. But the course of events has gone on clarifying the situation. The Congress today stands completely divorced from the masses, whose revolutionary action it has repeatedly disowned and denounced. Its political programme, which in the beginning reflected the vagueness of its social background, is gradually crystallizing according to the interests of the middle class, comprised of small proprietors and petty intellectuals. The idea behind the Non-Co-operation Movement was that the Reforms did not promise any betterment for the middle classes; so their spokesmen, viz., the Extremists, decided to wreck them. There was no question of national import involved in it. It was purely a piece of class politics. In fact, the Self-government demanded by the Extremists is hardly anything else than the Self-government advocated by the Liberals. What the former want is only to have a comfortable place in this Self-government. The reforms failed to promise that much; hence the non-co-operation. But the success of the Reforms did not depend on the cooperation of the middle class. They were meant to placate and win over the collaboration of the upper classes, landlords, big capitalists, rich merchants, and prosperous intellectuals. In this the Reforms succeeded. The non-co-operation of the middle class Extremists could in no way foil the policy of the government.

This failure of the Non-Co-operation Movement was due to the fact that it was actuated by a purely middle class outlook. The triple boycott of the Councils, law courts and schools, was made the cornerstone of the whole movement. Now the most advanced section of the Extremists is calling for an abandonment of the triple boycott, because it does not serve the interests of the middle class any more than do the Reforms. The section that still clings to orthodox non-co-operation has no political significance. Both, however, have proved themselves equally hostile to mass-movement of revolutionary character. The experience of the last two years has shown the true social character of the non-co–operating Extremists. Had they been anything but the standard-bearers of middle class interest, the Congress would not have been forced to beat a shameful retreat just at the moment when the revolutionary mass movement was as its highest. When faced with the alternatives of either leading the Indian people in a revolutionary channel towards national liberation, or of deserting the revolutionary struggle for national liberation for the safety of property-right, the Congress chose the latter, thus exposing the truth that *it did not stand for the entire nation, but for a certain class. The repudiation of the mass demonstrations during the Prince's visit, the condemnation of the revolutionary actions of the poor peasantry in the United Provinces, and the stout defence of landlordism contained in the Bardoli Resolutions, proved that the non-co-operating Congress was not the political party of the masses of the people.*

The triple boycott repudiated, what is left of the political programme of the Congress? The only point that deserves mention and can be considered of any significance is the fourth boycott, — the boycott of British goods. Supposing that the Congress will be able to carry this point through, who will be benefited by it? Evidently not the common people. It will be a struggle between the foreign capitalist and native manufacturer for the capture of the Indian market. Surely this does not entitle the Congress to claim the leadership of the Indian people. *Khaddar and Charka, on which the orthodox non-co–operators pin their hopes, cannot be the basis of a great political movement.* Then as a political weapon, it is again the interests of the capatalist classes that will be served by the propagation of Khaddar and Charka; because nobody with any knowledge of the means of modern production will look upon them as anything but instrumental in tiding over the transition period. In other words, the most that can be expected of the Charka and Khaddar is to supplement the Indian cotton mills in their struggle against Lancashire.

At the present moment, the Indian mills cannot produce much more than half the textile fabrics needed for the consumption of the people. The rest has to be imported from some foreign country or other. So long as this cannot also be produced in the country, there is no chance of ousting the foreign commodity from the Indian market. And this increase of production cannot take place unless new mills are built. If the propaganda for the use of home-spun and extensive revival of hand-spinning can be carried on to any appreciable success, that portion of the demand which the Indian mills cannot cover at the present moment and, consequently, which must be met with imported stuff, will be met to some extent. This will give the Indian capitalist the time necessary to increase the productive capacity of the existing mills or to build new ones. Then, as soon as the native machine industry will be capable of supplying the entire demand of the country, Khaddar and Charka will fall victim to it, after having rendered assistance to its development. While it is well known how more than a hundred years ago the flourishing textile handicraft of India was killed in the struggle against machine-produce imported from thousands of miles away, it is simply to betray one's ignorance of the economic laws determining production to expect that it will fare any better *when pitted against the same force of machine production developing in the heart of the country*. Besides, in those days handicrafts were not so antiquated a means of production as now, and machine industry was still in its youth. The situation is completely reversed today.

Such is the economic significance of the main plank in the platform of the middle class political party, which the non-cooperating Congress essentially is. Its very problematical success will only strengthen the position of industrial capital, and incidentally bring some profit into the pocket of the trading middleman. In other words, it is sure to defeat its own utopian end; *because, instead of harming industrialism, it will help the growth of it inside the country, thus aggrandizing the native capitalist class*.

In its political aspect the slogan of Khaddar and Charka also tends towards the self-same goal,—the aggrandizement of the upper and middle classes. It is impossible to boycott effectively the British cotton goods by relying completely upon the native mill production, which falls considerably short of the minimum requirement of the people. The machine production cannot be increased overnight. Therefore some improvized method has to be found. Thus is invented the theory of home-spun and the spinning wheel to fill in the gap as much as possible. Success of the boycott will induce the Lancashire textile interest, which is the background of English liberalism, to bring pressure upon the government to make concession to the Indian upper and middle classes. *Thus the programme of Khaddar and Charka, if successful, will achieve approximately the same result as is sought for by the Liberals in other ways*. It is idle to think that even the heaviest pressure of boycott will force the British government to forego its imperial authority to such an extent that the measure of Self-government wrung from it by this way will correspond to any appreciable degree of national independence. The Fiscal autonomy promised by the Reforms Act, when granted, will only benefit industrial capital; Self-government exacted by means of a successful boycott, supplemented by other means, will be comprehensive enough to confer upon the upper layer of the middle classes the boon of political rights and economic prospects. In short, *the middle class party non-co-operates with the Reformed government, because no provision has been made for it therein*. The logical consequence of this politics is that as soon as the Reforms will be so extended as to make room for the middle class, non-co-operation will end. This programme does not take us very far towards national liberation. And for all practical purposes this is the essence of the non-co-operating Congress, which is the political party of the disgruntled middle class.

The remarkable fact that non-co-operators did not even so much as define Swaraj proves that they will be always ready to cut their coat according to the cloth. If they declare what degree of Self-government is their minimum demand, they commit themselves thereby to go to a given length at all costs. But they are not willing to do even that, because they find it convenient to reserve the right of stopping the movement whenever and wherever they like. This is a typical petty bourgeois outlook. Never to have a fixed goal to reach which, determined efforts and resolute action will be required. But a movement conducted according to the convenience and capability of the narrow-visioned and hesitating middle class can never go far enough to conquer the political freedon of a nation. Its success leaves the problem of national liberation unsolved, because such success will only amount to a little more extended measure of self-government than that allowed by the Reforms. And such an extended measure of Self-government will leave the economic and political status of the masses, that is *more than ninety per cent of the people,* practically untouched. This is no National Freedom, which is required for the progress of the Indian people and which should be the goal of the Indian National Congress if it is not to forfeit its claim to national leadership.

Concessions granted to the upper classes did not satisfy the middle class; therefore the latter took up the movement deserted by the former. It cannot, therefore, be expected that the measure of Self-government which will satisfy the middle class will improve the present condition of the workers and peasants. The Liberal League of the Moderates deserted the national movement so soon as provisions were made for the development of the class represented by them. If the national movement is now based exclusively on the interests of the middle class,. it will surely be stopped on the realization of the objects sought for the welfare of the middle class. Therefore *the formation of a Party of the masses has become necessary, at first to support the middle class democrats in their struggle against the alliance of the Liberals and imperialists, and then to assume the leadership of the movement as soon as it will be deserted by the middle class party, unable and unwilling to go any farther.*

In the hands of the unformed and confused middle class, the Congress has ceased to be a fighting political organ. Its framework, which was suitable for the constitutional agitation of an incipient bourgeoisie, does not suffice for the activities of a militant mass party. The capture of the Congress by a mass party will have to take place before the goal of national independence can be reached. But in the near future the leadership of the Congress must remain in the hands of the middle class democrats, who have still a role to play. *To strengthen the position of these middle class democrats, to push them forward, to encourage them to put forth greater demands, and to cut off everywhere their retreat to the camp of the Liberals under some pretext or other, should be the task of the new party.* The non-co-operation programme of the Congress cannot be carried through with the middle class alone, as was expected. This programme can be carried to its logical conclusion only by a mass party, which the present Congress is not, and cannot be, owing to its predominantly middle class composition and petty bourgeois ideology. The present crisis in the movement will end in the formation of a middle class democratic party with a clearly defined class programme. In fact, the party is already more than half-organized; those seceders from the orthodox non-co-operators with a strongly religio-reactionary nature, are its pioneers. This party will revive the programme of the old Extremists, with some additions and modifications.

The Congress will pass on to the control of these democrats, given to pronouncing formidable phrases, but willing to compromise with the government as soon as the latter will show any inclination to give in sufficiently. Left alone, this party will be of very little potentiality, being based on a shallow social foundation. On the one hand, it will lack the backing of big capital, and on the other, it will not have the courage to secure the support of the masses by means of revolutionary agitation among them. In such a position, nothing spectacular can be expected from it. Most likely it will merge into the ranks of the Liberals before long. This eventuality must be prevented, and *a well-organized political party of the masses is alone capable of doing it by rallying the forces of mass-energy to the support of the middle-class democrats in their struggle for national liberation.* But the organization of a mass party cannot be done except on the principle of class interests. When at every step, the upper and middle class politicians betray the masses, and rush to the defence of their class interest at every conceivable opportunity, it is idle to talk about an all-inclusive national party based upon the principle of class-collaboration. The upper and middle class elements will surely try to do it as they have been already doing but only to deceive the masses, who are to be betrayed as in the past. Such attempts always end in the dissipation of mass-energy, which can be properly put into action only under the guidance of a Revolutionary Party consciously defending the interests of the working class.

This mass party should take the field with a clearly defined programme of national liberation. On the one hand, it will support the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the Imperialist domination and on the other, it will gather under its banner all the available revolutionary forces.*

(*To be continued*)

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*Vol. I, No. 5, 1 December, 1922. Although this instalment also included the announcement 'to be continued', no further instalment of this article appeared in the subsequent issues of *The Advance-Guard*. However, 'A Programme for the Indian National Congress' was published in the same issue (reproduced next) and it was given wide publicity by Reuter. The argument of the unfinished series is more fully presented in the book ***What do We Want*** published at about the same time. S.N.R.

A Programme for the Indian National Congress

Program of National Liberation and Reconstruction

1. Complete National Independence, separated from all Imperial connection and free from all foreign supervision.
2. Election of a National Assembly by Universal Suffrage. The sovereignty of the people will be vested in the National Assembly, which will be the supreme authority.
3. Establishment of the 'Federated Republic of India'.

Social And Economic Programme

1. Abolition of Landlordism. Confiscation of all large estates without compensation. Ultimate ownership of the land to be vested in the National State. The right to hold land to be given only to those who cultivate it. No tax-farming.
2. Reduction of Land Rent to a fixed minimum, to improve the economic condition of the cultivator. Establishment of State Agricultural Co-operative Banks to provide credit for the peasant and to free him from the clutches of the money-lender and speculating trader.
3. Introduction of modern methods of agriculture by State Aid. Agricultural machinery to be sold or lent to the cultivator on easy terms through State Co-operative Banks.
4. Abolition of all Indirect Taxation, and a Progressive Income Tax upon all income exceeding five hundred rupees a month.
5. Nationalization of Public Utilities. Mines, Railways, Telegraphs and Inland Waterways to be owned and operated by the State under the control of Workers' Committees, not for profit, but for the use and benefit of the Nation.
6. Development of modern industries by the aid and under the supervision of the State.
7. Minimum Wages in all industries, to be fixed by the Legislature.
8. An Eight Hour Day. Eight hours a day for five and a half days a week to be the legal maximum working-day for male adults. Special laws for protection of women and child labour.
9. Employers' liability to provide a minimum standard of comfort in housing and working conditions, medical aid, etc., for their employees.

10. Compulsory Old Age, Sickness and Unemployment Insurance for all industries.

11. Full recognition of rights of labour to organize, to declare strikes and enforce their demands by direct action.

12. Workers' Councils to be formed in all big industries to defend the rights of labour. These Councils to function under the protection of the State.

13. Profit-sharing in all big industries.

14. Free and compulsory education, for both boys and girls as far as the Secondary Schools. Establishment of State Vocational and Technical Training Schools.

15. Freedom of religion and worship and separation of religion from the political State.

16. Full social, economic and political rights for women.

17. Abolition of Standing Army, and arming of the entire people to defend the National Freedom. Compulsory military training for all citizens, and organization of a National Militia.

Action Program

In order to lead the people step by step in the greater fight, we must take up their immediate problems, and convince them by actual struggle that their everyday life is bound up with the destiny of the entire nation. To develop all the forces oppressed and exploited under the present order and to lead them in the struggle for national liberation, the Indian National Congress should adopt the following Program of Action:

1. Organization of militant Peasants' Unions to agitate for:
    - a) Abolition of all Feudal Rights and Dues
    - b) Repeal of the Permanent Settlement and Talukdary System
    - c) Confiscation of all large Estates
    - d) Organization of Councils of Village Cultivators to manage all confiscated Estates
    - e) Reduction of Land Rent, Irrigation Tax, Road Cess etc.
    - f) Fixed Tenures
    - g) No Ejection
    - h) Abolition of all Indirect Taxation
    - i) Low Prices
    - j) Annulment of mortgages etc., held by the money-lenders.

2. Organization of countrywide Mass Demonstrations under the slogan of non-payment of rent and taxes.

3. Organization of Mass Resistance against high prices, increased railway fare, postage rates, salt tax and other indirect taxation.

4. Recognition of Labour Unions and the right of strike to enforce the demands of the workers.

5. An Eight Hour Day. Minimum wage and better housing for industrial workers.

6. Organization of Mass Strikes to back up these demands, looking towards the declaration of a countrywide general strike.

7. To support all strikes politically and financially out of Congress Funds.

8. To agitate for freedom of press, speech and assembly.

9. Organization of Tenants' Strikes against high house-rents in the cities.

10. Organization of a countrywide national Volunteer Corps.

11. Organization of clerks and employees in the Government and Commercial Houses to strike for economic and political demands.

12. Participation in the councils with the object of wrecking them.

13. The release of political prisoners, by the organization of Mass Demonstrations and a General Strike.*

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* Vol. I, No. 5, 1 December, 1922. Published prominently in two columns on the front page with double column headline. This programme was cabled to India by Reuter and published widely in India and abroad. It caused panic in a section of the Congress leadership which found its advocacy of abolition of landlordism, minimum wages and eight hour day, workers' councils and particularly its action programme very revolutionary and dangerous. *The Advance-Guard* published its comment on this reaction in its issue of 1 February, 1923 (Vol. I, No. 9). The programme was also issued as a separate leaflet and sent out with copies of *What do We Want* to India. Hundreds of copies of 1 December issue of the *Advance-Guard*, the separate leaflet and the pamphlet were confiscated by the government. S. N. R.

What shall we do at Gaya?

This pertinent question must be troubling our leaders on the eve of the annual session of the National Congress. The ability to answer it will depend on their readiness to confess the bankruptcy of the old tactics, on their willingness to take rude realities into consideration and their courage to formulate a programme calling for revolutionary action. It is quite evident that those at the helm of the Congress are afraid to tackle the problem. The task seems to have grown too complicated for their mentality, running straight on the single-track line of metaphysical nationalism. But this state of affairs cannot continue for ever. There must be an end to it. The country demands to know what is in store for it. By repeated adjournments, the All-India Congress Committee has tried to pigeonhole the burning question of Civil Disobedience. But the annual session of the Congress will have all the outstanding questions before it to be solved. From Gaya must come the verdict which will decide the fate of the Congress and the future of our movement. Therefore, the question 'What shall we do at Gaya? concerns all who are interested in rescuing our movement from the present depression.

We have been telling since the beginning of the year that the Congress cannot go farther ahead without a programme. To see that this much-needed programme is discussed and adopted is precisely what should be done at Gaya. But who is going to see that this is done? Who is capable of bringing forward a programme which is needed, which will rally under the banner of the Congress the demoralized and scattered national forces? An analysis of the conflicting tendencies, which will be present at Gaya, is needed for answering this question.

First of all it is time for every Congressman to understand that the so-called 'national unity' is an illusion, that the National Congress is not a cohesive political party, and that within it are to be found social elements with diverse economic interests and consequently with incompatible social tendencies, which must reflect upon their respective political aspiration. The whole National Movement is divided into three camps viz., the Right Wing, the Centre and the Left. The first contains the Moderates, Liberals or Co-operators; in the Centre stand the orthodox non-co-operators; and the Left is composed of the oppressed lower middle class, pauperized intellectuals and the masses of workers and peasants.

If the Liberals, representing the interests of large vested capital, found it convenient to follow a policy of compromise with the imperialist exploiter, the Extremist Nationalists passing under the name of non-co-operators in the last years, have proved themselves unable and unwilling to risk a decisive struggle. Each of these political parties has taken its turn in leading the national struggle till the first was bought over by concessions and the second came to the end of its rope, owing to its socially reactionary character and the consequent confusion in political ideology. The time has come for the appearance of the third, that is, *a party voicing the sentiments and aspirations of those sections of our people whose interests have not been taken into consideration by any of the former political parties.*

The most outstanding feature of the contemporary stage of our movement is the decomposition of the Centre, with its nebulous theories and hesitating tactics. This decomposition will fundamentally strengthen the national struggle, although there may be a superficial set-back, as a result of the probable reversion of the Congress to Liberal ideology, because it is sure that Gaya must see the abdication of the orthodox non-co-operators from the Congress leadership, if the Congress is to continue its existence as the organ of national struggle. Now the question is, who is going to take the place thus vacated?

There are two prospects: first, the liberal intellectuals, who are revolting against the metaphysical politics of orthodox non-co-operation, may capture the leadership of the Congress under the banner of Rationalism which, however, in the political field will have little revolutionary reflection. Secondly, a Party of Revolutionary Nationalists may emerge, representing the interests of the masses, interests which cannot be defended by any economic concessions or political adjustments. At the present moment, there is more likelihood of the first coming to power than the second, because although it is certain that our movement for national liberation can reach its ultimate victory only under the leadership of the latter, this revolutionary party of the people is not yet developed enough to contest the supreme leadership of the national struggle. Therefore, it is to be expected that in the period immediately following the Gaya sessions, the leadership of the Congress will pass to the control of the Liberal intellectuals, who for the last two years militated within the ranks of the non-co-operators whose socio-economic philosophy and bewildered tactics, however, failed to satisfy their progressive tendencies. But this will mean the reversion of the Congress to a period of tameness; because the Extremism of these progressive intellectuals falls far short of any revolutionary character. National autonomy preached or even demanded by them is hardly anything but the Constitutional Democracy of the Moderates, being the political enfranchisement and economic development of the upper and middle classes. But it should be noted that *even these modest demands of the bourgeoisie cannot be realized without a struggle with the imperialists, and the middle class intellectuals cannot carry on this struggle single-handed.* Hence the possibility that in their hands, the Congress will be ere long transformed into the organ of Constitutional Democracy engaged in negotiation and not struggle with the foreign ruler.

To prevent this eventuality is the task of the advanced and conscious revolutionary element in our nationalist movement. And this can be done only in one way: *by organizing the masses, the workers and peasants, in their own class party advocating their own class interests.* Such a party will bring into the Congress the revolutionary outlook lacked by all those social elements who have so far controlled the national movement for their respective limited class interests. For example, the Rationalist intellectuals can only carry out their project of wrecking the Councils if they are assured of support from the revolutionary masses. But this support they are not in a position to enlist, because their socio-political philosophy and economic interests do not permit them to adopt such measures as are required to develop the revolutionary consciousness and activities of the masses—factors that are essential for any steady political action on the part of the latter.

The Non-Co-operation Movement started and went through a short but spectacular career owing to the fact that the accumulation of objective forces led to a widespread mass awakening. The failure of the Non-Co-operation Movement, which but a year ago, was surcharged with revolutionary possibilities and constituted a positive menace to the ruling class, was due to its drifting away from the revolutionary forces. The intellectuals with their social rationalism, economic progressivism and political extremism, will not fare any better than their non-co-operating predecessors if they do not have the support of the masses; and it is evident that their programme does not include the measures that can appeal to the imagination of the workers and peasants. Since a revolutionary mass party of the people is not yet formed which can contest the leadership of the national movement, the existing elements making for the inevitable and imminent rise of such a party, should begin their historical mission by serving as the connecting link between the masses and the progressive intellectuals. *We must go to Gaya in order to declare our intention to initiate this new stage of the movement, in order to bring forward a programme of action which is essential for the further development of the revolutionary consciousness of the masses, and in order to invite the progressive intellectuals to subscribe to such a programme.*

So, it is clear what we shall do at Gaya. First of all, it will be necessary to declare that one phase of our struggle has come to an end, and this declaration should logically be followed by the formulation of a programme commensurate with the socio-economic needs and aspirations of the broad masses, and of a new set of tactics to be employed in the new stage of the struggle. This is the only way by which the integrity, even the very existence, of the Congress as the traditional organ of our national struggle can be preserved. Left to the mercy of orthodox non-co-operation, it will receive nothing but a solemn burial at Gaya, and under the exclusive control of progressive rationalism it will lose all that revolutionary potentiality which lies in its organic connection with the masses. The historic development of social forces destine the first to be overthrown by the second, which is the most revolutionary contribution of the upper and middle classes to the national struggle.

The passing of the leadership of our movement into the hands of the progressive intellectuals will mark a step forward; because it will inevitably lead to a clarification of the ideology and consequently the tactics of the struggle. But devoid of any organic connection with the masses, the political extremism of the progressive intellectuals will not lead the Congress very far. Therefore, we must endeavour to strengthen the position of the coming leaders by showing them the way by which the revolutionary masses can be more and more involved in the political movement led by the Congress. In order to do this effectively, *the revolutionary factions believing in mass action should form an Opposition Block within the Congress*, with the object of criticizing any attempt to lead the Congress away from the high road of revolution, either in the name of philosophical pacifism or under the slogan of orderly progress and constructive action. This Opposition Block, which will eventually grow into the revolutionary party of the people destined to be the leader of the final struggle, should put forth a programme calculated to give fresh impetus to the waning enthusiasm of the masses and thus draw them into the political struggle. The general lines of this programme have been indicated by us repeatedly since last year. The adoption of such a programme cannot be postponed any longer if the movement is to be carried forward. The sincerity of the various factions participating in the Congress will be tested by their readiness to subscribe to a programme calculated to intensify the struggle.

The voice of the great majority of the Indian people should be raised in the Congress at Gaya and it should be made known that in the coming stage of our struggle this voice will have a decisive character. This voice can be raised through the medium of a programme which should be formulated and put forward by those revolutionaries who struggle for national liberation, not to advance the interests of certain small sections, but in order that the way to progress and prosperity is laid open before the majority of the people.

Gaya will mark the renaissance of the Congress. We must go there to herald this new phase of our movement and begin the fight to base the national struggle on a really revolutionary foundation by making it a vital problem to the masses.*

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* Vol. I, No. 5, 1 December, 1922, editorial. After the murder of 22 policemen at Chauri Chaura on 4 February, 1922, Gandhi had suspended the Non-Co-operation movement on 6 February and this decision was endorsed by the Congress Working Committee on 12 February. Gandhi was arrested on 13 March and sentenced to six years' imprisonment; he was, however, prematurely released in 1924 on grounds of ill health. In June 1922, the All-India Congress Committee appointed a Civil Disobedience Inquiry Committee which submitted its report to Chittaranjan Das, President-elect of the forthcoming Gaya Congress. Gaya witnessed a fierce struggle for the control of the Congress between supporters of Council-entry (called the 'pro-changers', led by Das) and their opponents. At the end of the session Das resigned as President and on 31 December, 1922, he founded the Swaraj Party. He continued to speak against 'the concentration of power in the hands of the middle class,' but also clearly dissociated himself from the Communists. Among Roy's contacts S. A. Dange and Singaravelu Chettiar attended the Gaya Congress. S. N. R.

Religion and Private Property

While Master Mota Singh enters unnoticed upon his fiftieth day of hunger-strike for being deprived of his kirpan and black turban by the Government, and lies in so critical a condition that the doctors predict he will never live to complete his seven years sentence earned in the Akali's cause; while the Congress Committee makes a tour of enquiry in the Punjab and issues exultant statements on the 'spirit of passive resistance' and 'soul force' of the Akali Sikhs at Guru ka Bagh; while hundreds of these brave Akalis are advancing every day in orderly ranks upon the forbidden premises and are being beaten to the earth by brass-tipped poles of the police, or until yesterday, fired upon by the soldiery and arrested in scores on the charge of trespass and theft,—while all these stirring events are filling the press of India and until lately, of Great Britain,—an interesting controversy is being waged between the Government and the Udasis; who administer the disputed shrines, and whom the Akalis are struggling to oust.

Two Memorials to the Viceroy have recently been issued by the Mahants, or Guardians of the sacred shrines, giving their point of view on the present struggle, and protesting against the proposed Gurdwara legislation. These Udasi Mahants, who are ostensibly indifferent to all worldly considerations, such as love of self or power, resent the interference of the Punjab Government on the question as to who shall be the guardians of the shrines which they administer, and declare themselves quite capable of reforming themselves from within, should any undesirable elements be found amongst them. At the same time, they warn the Government against interfering in a purely religious dispute, and 'of helping one religious community against another', thus sacrificing a sacred principle for gaining a momentary political advantage. The Viceroy is called upon to safeguard their interests from the Punjab Administration's decisions, and that any legislation passed should be of a purely optional character.

Thus the whole question is put by the Udasi Mahants on the grounds of a religious dispute, which the Government is bound by declared policy, not to interfere with. But the point of view of the Punjab Administration as expressed in a recent Communique takes a more worldly view of the matter. 'The real issue', declares the official statement, issued on 11 September, 'is whether the Government is to discharge its primary duty of protecting individuals in the enjoyment of property of which they are in possession, or whether it is to abdicate its function in this matter under the pressure of force or show of force. Whatever the courts might decide as regards the rights of the Mahant to the land in dispute, he is indoubtedly at present in lawful possession and the proper course for those who desire to eject him is to prove their claim in a court of law. This they have deliberately refrained from doing and have preferred to attempt to enforce their supposed right by violent methods. In the circumstances, the Government has been compelled to perform its elementary duty of *protecting private property*, and in doing so, to employ all the resources at its disposal'.

So, with unerring instinct, the Government has put its finger on the real issue,—private property, which the Udasis try to cover up with the cloak of religion. The £700,000 which constitute the annual income of the shrines, may be holy money, but it is nevertheless substantial, and the Udasis mean to put up a fight before they relinquish this fat and comfortable living to the keeping of the illiterate Akalis.

The interesting and significant admission that the 'elementary duty of a Government is to protect private property' against the 'violent methods' of the Akalis, puts the Congress leaders who are so enthusiastically supporting the heroic struggle of the latter, in a peculiar and illogical position. If they believe in the sacred rights of private property, as exemplified by the rich and corrupt Mahants, backed by the armed forces of the state, they should not be so free in their professions of admiration for the 'lawless' activities of the Akalis, who are using direct action to regain possession of the rich shrines and temple lands for their own administration and use. By their unqualified endorsement of the Akali campaign of passive resistance, they endorse not merely passive resistance in the abstract, but the principle of *direct action* in restoring to the masses what has wrongfully been expropriated from them. This is a very dangerous admission for the framers of the Bardoli Resolutions. Mr Gandhi himself saw the anomaly of the situation, according to the letter of Mr Shittal Prasad Tayal published in the *Independent*, and advised the Sikhs not to enforce reform on the Mahants and declared the cutting down of trees on the shrine at Guru ka Bagh to be wrong. Is the Congress with the Government and private property, or for the rights of the dispossessed Akalis to regain by direct action their shrines from the Mahants?*

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* Vol. I, No. 3, 1 November, 1922, 'Notes and Comments'. The fight against the control of the wealthy Sikh shrines by the *mahants* led to the formation of the SGPC and the semi-military corps of volunteers known as the Akali Dal in November 1920. By November 1922, over 5000 Akalis had been arrested. Mota Singh was a Babbar or extremist Akali. The Sikh Gurdwaras Act was passed in 1925. For contemporary accounts, *Akali Dal and Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee*, CID Report by V.W. Smith, Simla, 1922; Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, Jullundar, 1922; G. R. Sethi, *Sikh Struggle for Gurdwara Reform*, Amritsar, 1927. S. N. R.

7 November, 1917–22

The fifth anniversary of the Russian Revolution of 7 November 1917, and the date of this year's celebration of the Congress of the Communist International coincide, and it is fitting that they should do so. For the Russian Revolution was the first historic instance of Communism in action if we except the brief rise and fall of the Paris Commune of 1871, whose ideology and leadership cannot be described as purely communistic, except for a left-wing minority. In November 1917, therefore, we find for the first time since the inception of Scientific or Marxian Socialism, a party raised to power and fashioning a government upon the principles and programme of Communism, which has been fittingly defined as *Socialism in action*. This party is the Russian Communist or Bolshevik (Majority) faction of the Russian Social Democratic Party, and it is these Russian Bolsheviki, or revolutionary socialists, who sounded the call for the organization of the Third or Communist International.

The First International, as everyone knows, formed under the leadership of Karl Marx in 1864, and inaugurated by the historic Communist Manifesto, received its death-blow by the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, in which the dawning spirit of international brotherhood and solidarity among the working masses of industrial Europe was drowned in an orgy of slaughter and destruction. The Second International, which for forty years carried on a campaign of education and organization among the European and American proletariat upon the lines of 'evolutionary', as distinguished from 'revolutionary' Marxism, collapsed in 1914, when the Social Democratic Parties of every country upheld their respective governments in the prosecution of the rankest and most blatantly imperialistic war, which the excesses of capitalistic competition have yet produced. The Third or Communist International, whose organization was demanded as early as 1915 by Lenin and a few brave dissenters against the 'social patriotism' of the leaders of the Second International, was formally founded in Moscow in 1919. This year is celebrated the Fourth World Congress of the Communist International, composed of the Communist Parties of nearly every country in the world, who have declared for the overthrow of Capitalistic Imperialism, and the establishment of a world federation of Communist States, by the combined revolutionary action of the organized international proletariat.

The program of Communism, as exemplified in the principles of the Communist International and those of the Russian Revolution, has a special interest and significance for the weak and backward peoples of the earth who are held in political and economic subjection by the mailed fist of Capitalistic Imperialism. The only hope of freedom for these subject peoples lies in the fulfilment of the Communist objective, for the forces of international capitalism are so strong and so co-ordinated that all the great powers will combine to crush, in their mutual interest, any movement for national emancipation that threatens their ultimate supremacy. Nationalist wars are already a thing of the past; imperialist wars, waged among the great powers themselves for control over weak and backward peoples rich in natural resources and labour power, are all that the future holds in store, until Capitalistic Imperialism is itself overthrown by the embattled hosts of the world proletariat.

Therefore it is that the present Congress of the Communist International, whose opening session is being celebrated simultaneously with the fifth anniversary of that great event, the second or Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, will be watched with eagerness and hope by the millions of people in Asia, Africa and the small and weak countries of Central and South America, whose peoples are enslaved, actually if not in fact, by the domination of Big Finance. In the deliberations of the international proletariat, seeking a way to free itself from its present economic subjection to Capitalism, lies the key to the national freedom of the countries subjected to Imperialism. And for this reason, the doors of the Communist International have been thrown wide, not alone to the delegates of the world Communist Parties, but to the accredited representatives of fighting proletarian organizations and to revolutionary nationalists of every country struggling for freedom. Representatives from China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Persia, Turkey, Africa and India will meet and mingle and freely discuss their common problems of emancipation with the proletarian delegates from the countries of Europe and America. In the present Congress will be laid down a plan of campaign for the ensuing year which will be conducted on a world scale against the common enemy, International Capitalism and Imperialism. The Communist International is the General Staff of the militant forces that seek to bring about a fundamental change in our present-day society, whose co-ordinated and disciplined action in the common cause can alone bring about the desired result.

And a special significance lies in the fact that this General Staff of the world revolutionary forces finds for the present, its home and stronghold in Soviet Russia, which constitutes the beacon-light of Hope and Freedom in a world overcome at present by the darkest reaction and tyranny. In Soviet Russia alone can the revolutionary forces of every land find refuge and asylum, safe from their oppressors; in Soviet Russia alone can the Communist International celebrate its World Congresses, with all the resources of the Russian State placed at its disposal for the successful prosecution of its program.

Those who speak exultingly of the failure of Communism as exemplified in the great Russian experiment, and those who lament that the Russian Revolution has betrayed its principles and sold itself to Capitalism, should cease for a moment to dwell on the superficial failures and defeats of a great cause that labours slowly but surely forward, and should lift their eyes to behold the ultimate triumph and justification of this greatest revolution of modern history. In a world groaning in the travail of an old order giving birth to the new, Soviet Russia shines as the bright precursor of that which is to come. The first child born from the womb of decrepit Capitalism, she struggles in the blood and tears of the after-birth, to clear her young strong limbs and eager new life from the filth and debris of the past, in order to pass fearlessly forward into the dawning future. But not alone. Together with her must come all the as yet unborn new beings whose bloody birth-pangs of revolution are yet to be endured, and with infinite love and sense of human fellowship, young Russia stretches her hand to these unborn forces of the future, lifting high the torch of Revolution victorious to hasten them on their way. No matter how dark the throes of fierce reaction in which the world is struggling, the future can never be quite hopeless so long as this strong and buoyant comrade holds ground and beckons the mass of labouring humanity upward and onward. For this supreme service, this victory and triumph is your Revolution, with its five years of staunch fighting against a world of foes, justified, Oh Russia! Revolutionaries throughout the world salute you on this fifth anniversary of your being.*

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* Vol. I, No. 4, 7–15 November, 1922. Editorial. S.N.R.

What Will Be Discussed

Agenda of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International

1. Report of the Executive and the Further Tactics of the C. I. Speaker: Zinoviev.

2. Five years of Russian Revolution and Perspectives of the World Revolution. Speakers: Lenin, Trotsky; Clara Zetkin, Germany; Cachin, France; Roland-Holst, Holland; Bela Kun, Hungary.

3. The Offensive of Capitalism. Speakers: Radek; Tom Mann, Great Britain; Zapotozky, Czechoslovakia; A special report on Fascism: Bordiga, Italy.

4. The struggle against the Versailles Treaty and the Tasks of the Communist Parties. Speakers: Frossard and Vaillant-Couturier, France; MacManus and Newbold, Great Britain; Smeral, Czechoslovakia; Kolarow, Balkan Federation.

5. The Trade Union Question. Speakers: Lozovsky, Russia; Brandler, Germany; Tomasi, France.

6. The Agrarian Question. Speakers: Varga, Hungary; Renoult, France; Theodorovitch, Russia; Kostzeva and Markhlevsky, Poland; Markovic, Jugoslavia.

7. The Eastern and the Colonial Question. Speakers: Katayama, Japan; Roy, India; Van Ravesteyn, Holland.

8. Educational Work. Speakers: Hoernle, Germany; Krupskaya, Russia; Barbusse, France; Roland-Holst, Holland; Kuusinen, Finland.

9. The Situation in the French Party after the Paris Convention. Speakers: Frossard and Souvarine, France.

10. Program of the C.I. and of its Various Parties. Speakers: Bukharin and Thalheimer. The Bureau of the Section: Zinoviev, Trotsky, Radek, Varga, Starsky; Strasser, Austria; Smeral, Czechoslovakia; Kabaktchief, Bulgaria; Bordiga, Italy; Frossard, France; Shefiflo, Norway; Katayama, Japan.

11. The Young Communist International. Speakers: Volny, Schueler, Germany.

12. Report of the Co-operative Section.

13. Report of the Women's Secretariat. Speaker: Clara Zetkin.

14. Organization of the Information Service of the C.I. Speaker: Paul Louis, France. Members of the Commission: Radek, Varga;

Gramsci, Italy; Meyer, Germany; Alpari, Hungary; Kohn, Ukraine; Preobazhensky and Miskin, Russia.

15. The Seal of the Executive and Election of the President of the C.I.

16. Organization of the Work of the Executive.*

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* Vol. I, No. 4, 7–15 November, 1922.

In 1917, even before coming to power in Russia, the Bolshevik party had decided at Lenin's instance 'to take the initiative in establishing a Third International'. Invitations were issued in January 1919 and the Founding Congress of the Communist International was held in Moscow from 2 to 6 March, 1919. There were altogether seven Congresses (1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1924, 1928, 1935); Roy attended and played a prominent part in the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth. During the Second World War, an official statement of the presidium announced 'the dissolution of the Communist International' on 15 May, 1943. For primary sources: official publication of *Protokoll*, Thesen und Resolutionen of each Congress; *International Press Correspondence* and *The Communist International; Kommunisticheskii Internatsional V Dokumentaki*, ed. Bela Kun, Moscow, 1933; *The Communist International Documents*, 3 vols, ed. Jane Degras, London, 1956, 1960, 1965.

S.N.R.

The World Congress of the Communist International

From our Special Correspondent

Moscow, 3 Nov. The Congress meets this month. The delegates are limited to 600 besides 200 to the Second Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions and 60 to the International Congress of the Communist Youths. The opening ceremony took place in the Red City of Petrograd on the 5th., the Soviet of the city being the host. Then the delegates returned to Moscow to take part in the celebration of the anniversary of the Revolution of the 7th.

All the inaugural receptions, celebrations and demonstrations over, the work of the Congress began in the Kremlin. Lenin made his first public appearance since he fell sick half a year ago and his report to the Congress on the world situation and the prospects of Revolution show the world how much alive he is in spite of the campaign of lies. Trotsky's report on the world situation dealing particularly with the Anglo-American-Japanese conflict with its storm-centre in the Pacific is equally masterly.

Delegations have come from all the Eastern countries, even the far-off Dutch Indies are not excepted. In their numerous preliminary conferences the Oriental delegations are discussing the project of organizing a *United Anti-Imperialist Front*. Last year's experience has shown that the bourgeoisie in all the subject countries of the East fails the people at the most critical moment of the struggle. The Turkish delegates spoke very bitterly of the manner in which the military clique led by Kemal could not push the nationalist cause to the final victory which was almost in sight. They pointed out that the cause of this failure was the French suzerainty which the Turkish ruling class has accepted in order to fight the British. The hypocrisy of the claim of the Kemalists that they are fighting for the welfare of the Turkish people was exposed by the fact that a few days ago 16 leading members of the Communist Party of Angora were arrested and the headquarters of the party closed. The Communists always stood for the liberation of the Turkish nation from foreign imperialism, but they struggle against the reactionary internal policy of the Angora government; they demanded land reforms, universal suffrage, greater facilities of education and other innocent measures in order that the people might find a practical interest in the struggle for national freedom. But such demands were not to be tolerated. The Turkish delegation called upon the other Eastern delegates to pass a resolution of protest against this act of repression of the Angora government.

Representatives of the British, American, Australian and South African Communist Parties participated in these meetings of the Oriental delegations. In one of the meetings the British comrade explained the attitude of the British Communist Party about the Near East question and read the resolution passed a few days ago by the Congress of the party declaring for the complete liberation of the peoples subjected by British imperialism.

The question of the national struggle in the subject countries in the East is one of the principal subjects before the Congress. The conditions in the various countries are being seriously and minutely analysed by the Oriental delegates in conjunction with the representatives of the Western working class, in order to formulate the methods by which the struggle against imperialism can be intensified. It is evident from the reports of all the delegations that the Communist parties are alone capable of leading the masses of the population to the final victory in the struggle for national liberation. So means are being devised as to how the national struggle all over the East is to be intensified by awakening the revolutionary consciousness of the masses. It is declared by all the delegations that unless the battle is fought under a programme advocating the material interests of the toiling masses, the national liberation movement based purely on middle class ideology and middle class action cannot go very far and is bound to end in compromise as has been the case in Egypt, Turkey, India etc.

On the eve of the great Fourth World Congress, Moscow has become the vivid picture of the link that connects the oppressed people of the East with the proletarian masses of the oppressing countries. When we find a representative of the Chinese artisans or of the Turkish peasantry or of the Indian coolie eagerly discussing the effects of the split in the Italian Socialist party or the crisis in the French Communist Party or the tactics that the British Communists should adopt in the present parliamentary crises, the real significance of the Communist International becomes evident. On the other hand, the eagerness with which the representatives of the German, French, English and American proletariat try to find the best ways and means of developing the national struggle in the countries which are dominated by the ruling class of their own countries shows the approach of the Revolution which will liberate the world. To have brought into active life this international solidarity of the revolutionary forces of the world is the greatest achievement of the Russian Revolution, whose Fifth Anniversary is celebrated by the meeting of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International.*

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* Vol. I, No. 6, 15 December, 1922. S.N.R.

Eastern Question in the World Communist Congress

The Fourth World Congress of the Communist International, which met in Moscow for a whole month from 5 November to 5 December, discussed the problem of helping the liberation movement in the colonial and subject peoples of the East along with other questions concerning the World Revolution. The Eastern Question came up for discussion on the 27th of November and lasted full two days. The thesis on the question had already been considered exhaustively in the Commission which worked ever since the beginning of the Congress. Roy (India) and Van Ravenstein (Holland) were the principal reporters together with the veteran Japanese communist Sen Katayama and Tahar Boudengha, representing the French North African Colonies. Karl Radek concluded the debate with his usually brilliant exposition of the subject. . . .

Comrade Webb of the British Communist Party said: 'Since those days (of the Second Congress) we have had the development of the revolutionary national movements in Egypt, Persia, Mesopotamia, India and Turkey. In the preliminary draft of the thesis on the National and Colonial Question Lenin pointed out the importance, on the one hand, of the grouping of the advanced revolutionary movements in the advanced capitalist countries and on the other hand, the grouping toward Soviet Russia of the forces of revolutionary Nationalism. He pointed out that one must not stop at the simple recognition of this necessity of a union with the revolutionary nationalist movements in the colonies; that one must not stop at the mere proclamation, but must work out a policy which will be determined by the stage of development of the communist groups of those countries and the development of the bourgeois democratic liberation movements therein.

'Comrade Trotsky wrote before the Russian Revolution criticizing the German Social Democratic Party for its 'socialist imperialism'. I will stress the note this morning that we must do everything to prevent those elements coming into the Communist International which would endeavour to make the Communist International an International for Communist Imperialism, equivalent to the Socialist Imperialism criticized by Trotsky.

'The bourgeoisie is awake to the dangers of the transformation of a revolutionary nationalist movement into a revolutionary proletarian movement directed against the bourgeoisie. Therefore, those points in the theses spoken of by Comrade Roy in reference to the need for keeping the proletarian elements in these countries in close touch with the Communist Parties of the Imperialist countries, should be emphasized.'

RADEK'S SPEECH

At the Second Congress of the Comintern we discussed the theses on the great revolutionary importance of the movement in the East and on the necessity for the Comintern to support that movement. Our attitude at that time caused a clamour not only in the world of capitalism, realizing very well its reasons for fearing our decisions, but also in the parties of the Two and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. . . .

Now the importance of the Eastern question has become overwhelmingly obvious even to the blind. In the development of human history there are many different forces at work, and international imperialism seeks to divert and exploit the revolutionary struggle of the Eastern peoples. The miserable mercenaries of the 2 and 2½ Internationals cannot understand that, since the capitalist powers are trying to make the oriental nations an instrument of capitalism, it is the bounden duty of the working class to do everything possible to help the Eastern Peoples and to unite them with the European and World proletariat in the struggle against world capitalism. . . .

Our theses stated that the exploited East must and will fight against international capitalism, and that for this reason we ought to assist it. Now, we find at the head of the oriental nations neither Communists nor even bourgeois revolutionaries but for the most part representatives of the decayed feudal cliques belonging to the military and bureaucratic classes. This fact brings our aid to the Eastern peoples into contradiction with the question of our attitude towards the ruling elements. The question was brought to a head by the persecution of Communists in Turkey, and by the military suppression of Chinese strikers by Wu-Pei-Fu troops. As Communists, we may clearly and frankly state our attitude upon such matters without resorting to diplomacy. In promising our aid to the awakening East we did not for a moment lose sight of the class struggles that will yet have to be fought out in the East. In the Communist Manifesto of 1947, Karl Marx said to the German workers: Support your bourgeoisie in as much as its policy may further the revolution. Similarly he urged the Polish revolutionary elements to support those members of the landowning nobility who took a revolutionary attitude on the peasant question. He knew that the bourgeoisie would remain the bourgeoisie, that the Polish nobility would not change its nature. He knew that the young Labour movement would have to fight against these hostile classes. But he also saw that the historic moment required that the bourgeois revolutionary movement be supported in the very interest of the class struggle . . .

There is great room for treason and wavering in the East where the government is headed not only by petty bourgeoisie, but also by a decaying feudal caste. It will make a thousand attempts to sell itself to this or that faction of international capitalism. It will make a thousand attempts to betray the revolutionary interests of the country, but history will compel them to take up the fight again, because any lasting compromise with imperialism is out of the question. . . .

We therefore say not only from the standpoint of Soviet Russia, but also of the Communist International: You need have no anxiety. We do not stake on the ephemeral policy of this or that clique, but on the great historical stream which is bound to bring together the toiling masses of Western Europe with the awakening peoples of the East in the fight against world capitalism. . . .

Now as to Japan and India. In both these countries the grouping of the forces is very similar. In Japan, as well as in India, there is already a strong working class. In both countries there is a great social crisis, and struggles for power between the various sections of the bourgeoisie and of the nobility, and nevertheless, we have not yet a communist movement in these countries. This is a fact. You have only to study the manifestoes which Comrade Katayama published recently in the *Communist International* about the situation in Japan. They are very interesting, for you will find in these manifestoes which were legally published by various groups of workers, a whole rainbow of shades, from Tolstoyanism through syndicalism and communism to the simplest social reform. And I must admit that in this concert of voices, the voice of communism is still the weakest. . . .

In India we have already an ideological centre. I must say that comrade Roy has succeeded in achieving a big piece of work during the last year in the Marxist interpretation of Indian conditions given in his admirable book, and also in his organ. In no other Eastern communist party has this kind of work been done. It certainly deserves to be supported by the Communist International. However, it must be admitted that as yet we have not done much in connection with the great trade union movement in India and the large number of strikes which convulsed the country. We have not yet understood [enough] to make use of the rights which our British overlords are compelled to concede to us. The reception accorded there to comrade Roy shows that there are some legal opportunities there. We have taken the first steps as a practical workers' party.

Comrades, I trust that we will succeed at this congress to put the work which our Eastern section has done with your assistance, on a practical basis, and that we will then be able at the next congress to put before you practical organizational achievements. When this will have been achieved, the International will not only recognize the great importance of the Eastern question, but will also have the conviction that you are doing the work which is commensurate with the enormous significance of this question.

Comrades, the world situation today is different from what it was at the Second Congress. At the Second Congress, although it was not directly stated, but all the Eastern delegates felt that revolutionary events were brewing in the East. The present world situation, the fact that we are in a period when the revolution is gathering its forces, has exerted its influence on the situation in the Eastern countries, and if we want to play our part in the coming revolutionary struggles, we must pledge the comrades of the Eastern countries for a great organizational and political work. The East will naturally not lag behind with its revolutions until our comrades in all the countries have grasped that revolution does not mean the reading and digesting of the theses of the Communist Party but that revolutionary work is practical work within the masses. However, when great events are developing in the East, such as those in Turkey at present, while we are weak and unorganized they pass by us and we cannot exercise any revolutionary influence on them. Therefore the watchword of this Congress in the Eastern question must be: On to the toiling masses of the East, in order to educate them and to create strong points d'appui for the Communist International in the East such as would be of practical use in the struggle before us and assist us in influencing the masses. One more thing: in this work, after we have rallied the workers around us, you must go to the peasants and to the artisans, and you must become not only the nucleus of the future workers party, but also of the future peoples party. (Loud applause)*

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* Vol. 1, No. 7, 1 January 1923. Published as a report on pages 2, 3 and 4. Where passages have been left out this is indicated by three dots (...). Karl Radek was a top leader of the Comintern; his views on the National and Colonial Question were very different from Roy's. His speech from which segments are reproduced here reflects the ambiguous position of the Comintern. The Two-and-a-Half International mentioned by him refers to the International Union of Socialist Parties, founded at Vienna in February 1921, which included the Austrian, French and Swiss Socialist Parties, the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany, the British Independent Labour Party, the Russian Mensheviks and other smaller parties which had broken with the Second International but were unwilling to join the Third. S.N.R.

Report on the Eastern Question

To the Fourth World Congress of the Communist International

By M. N. Roy

At the Second Congress of the Communist International the general principles concerning the struggle for national liberation in the colonial and semi-colonial countries were laid down. The general principles were formulated by which the relations of the proletarian revolution and the proletarian movement of the industrially and economically advanced countries to the national struggle of the backward peoples, should be determined, and the experience that we had in 1920, that is, at the time of the Second Congress of the Communist International, did not permit us to develop those principles to any great extent. But since those days, during the last two years, the movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries has gone through a long period of development, and in spite of all that has been left undone, and in spite of all that ought to have been done by the Communist International and particularly by the Communist Parties of the Western countries to establish closer relations with these movements, and to develop them, we are today in a position to speak with more knowledge and more experience and understanding of these movements, in the colonial and semicolonial countries.

The Theses adopted by the Second Congress of the Communist International stated that the nationalist movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries was objectively, fundamentally, a revolutionary struggle, and as such it formed a part of the struggle for world revolution. Therefore it was determined that the Communist Parties in the Western countries and particularly those of the imperialist countries, should do everything in their power to develop these movements. But we did not know in those days how this instruction, this resolution of the Second Congress could be carried out; because in those days it was understood by a few that in the broad term 'colonial and semi-colonial countries' various regions and various peoples were included, which regions and peoples embraced within their limits all kinds of social development, all kinds of political and industrial backwardness. And we laid down the lines that simply because they were politically, economically, and socially backward they could all be bundled together into one category and the problem could be solved as a general problem. But that was a mistaken view. We know today that Eastern countries cannot be taken as a homogeneous whole either politically, economically or socially. Therefore this Eastern question is, for the Communist International, provided the Communist International wants to take it seriously, a question of much more complexity than that of the struggle in the West. The social character of the movement in the Western countries is uniform in the struggle. But in the East it is not so.

The countries in the East can be divided into three categories. First, those countries which are nearing to most highly developed capitalism. Countries where not only the import of capital from the metropolis has developed industry but a native capitalism has grown, leading to the rise of a bourgeoisie with a developed class consciousness, and its counterpart, the proletariat, which is also developing its class consciousness, and is engaged in an economic struggle which is gradually coming into its political stage. Second, those countries in which capitalist development has taken place but is still at the lower level, and in which feudalism is still the backbone of society. Then we have the third grade, where primitive conditions still prevail, where feudal patriarchalism is the social order. How, then, for the countries under the heading of the colonial and semi-colonial countries, which can be divided into groups so apart from each other, a general program or a general line of tactics can be determined in order to help the development of the revolutionary movement in those countries? The task before us today in this Fourth Congress is to elaborate those fundamental principles that were laid down by the Second Congress of the Communist International. We are faced today with a concrete problem of how best we can develop the movement in those countries; we have the revolutionary movement in each. But since the social structure of these countries is different, naturally the character of the revolutionary movement in those countries is also different. In so far as the social character is different the program for those movements must be different, and the tactics must also be different.

With this in view all the Eastern delegations present at this Congress in co-operation with the Eastern section of the Communist International, have prepared a thesis which has been submitted to the Congress. In this thesis the general situation in the East has been laid down and the development in the movement since the Second Congress has been pointed out and the general line which should determine the development of the movement in those countries has also been formulated.

At the time of the Second Congress, that is, on the morrow of the Great Imperialist war, we found a general upheaval of the colonial people. This upheaval was brought about by the intensified economic exploitation during the war.

This great revolutionary upheaval attracted the attention of the whole world. We had a revolt in Egypt in 1919, and one of the Korean people in the same year. In the countries lying between these two extreme points there was to be noticed a revolutionary upheaval of more or less intensity and extensiveness. But at that time these movements were nothing but big spontaneous upheavals and since those days the various elements and social factors which went to the composition of these movements have clarified in so far as the social economic basis has gone on developing. Consequently we find today that the elements which were active participants in those movements two years ago are gradually leaving them if they have not already left them. For example, in the countries which are more developed capitalistically the upper level of the bourgeoisie, that is, that part of the bourgeoisie which has already what may be called a stake in the country, which has a large amount of capital invested, and which has built up an industry, is finding that today it is more convenient for its development to have imperialist protection. Because, when the great social upheaval that took place at the end of the war, developed into its revolutionary sweep it was not only the foreign imperialist but the native bourgeoisie as well who were terrified by its possibilities.

The bourgeoisie in none of those countries is developed enough as yet to have the confidence of being able to take the place of foreign imperialism and to preserve law and order after the overthrow of imperialism. They are now really afraid that in case foreign rule is overthrown as a consequence of the development of this revolutionary upheaval, a period of anarchy, chaos and disturbance of civil war will follow that will not be conducive to the promotion of their own interests. That is to say, the industrial development of the bourgeoisie needs peace and order which was given to most of these countries by foreign imperialism. The threat to this peace and order, the possibility of disturbance and revolutionary upheaval, has made it more convenient for the native bourgeoisie to compromise with the imperial overlord.

This naturally has weakened the movement in some of the countries but at the same time this temporary compromise does not fundamentally weaken the movement. In order to maintain its hold in those countries, imperialism must look for some local help, must have some social basis, must have the support of one or other of the classes of native society. Today it has found it necessary to repudiate the old methods of imperialist exploitation and to give the native bourgeoisie or a certain part of the native bourgeoisie certain concessions in the political or economic sphere. These concessions have reconciled the native bourgeoisie temporarily, but they have opened a bigger vision before it. They have permitted a test of economic development and brought into existence a capitalist rivalry, because, in so far as industry grows in the colonial countries it undermines the basis of the monopoly of imperial capital.

Therefore, the temporary compromise between native and imperial bourgeoisie cannot be everlasting. In this compromise we can find the development of a future conflict.

Then, in that second group of countries where usury and trades-capital, feudal bureaucracy, and the feudal militarism are the leading social element and the leaders of the national movement, this compromising imperial policy has been introduced, but it has not given such satisfactory results as in the other countries because the interest of the feudal bureaucracy and the colonial feudal lords are not so easily comparable as is the case between the imperial and the native bourgeoisie. Therefore we find that in the last year the struggle in Turkey, the nationalist strugle in Turkey, took the forefront of all the colonial struggles.

But the latest events in Turkey show us the weakness of this as well, because we know that a national struggle cannot develop consciousness of political nationhood, cannot grow in a people, so long as the social economics of that particular people are bound up with the feudal patriarchal system. Unless the bourgeoisie come into existence and become leaders of the society the national struggle cannot take place with all its revolutionary possibilities. So in all these countries, in proportion as the bourgeoisie is developing, the national struggle has become intensified. From this point of view, although we know there is danger of the colonial bourgeoisie always compromising with the imperial bourgeoisie, we must always on principle stand for them; that a bourgeois national movement in the colonial countries is objectively revolutionary, therefore it should be given support; but we should not overlook the fact that this objective force cannot be accepted as unconditional, and that particular historical reasons should be taken into consideration. The bourgeoisie becomes a revolutionary factor when it raises the standard of revolt against backward, antiquated forms of society—that is, when the struggle is fundamentally against the feudal order, the bourgeoisie leading the people. Then the bourgeoisie is the vanguard of the revolution.

But this cannot be said about the new bourgeoisie in the Eastern countries, or most of them. Although the bourgeoisie is leading the struggle there, it is at the same time not leading it against feudalism. It is leading the struggle against capitalism. Therefore it is a struggle of the weak and suppressed and undeveloped bourgeoisie against a stronger and more developed bourgeoisie. Instead of being a class war it is an internecine war so to say, and as such contains the elements of compromise.

So, the nationalist struggle in the colonies, the revolutionary movement for national development in the colonies, cannot be based purely and simply on a movement inspired by bourgeois ideology and led by the bourgeoisie. And we see how in every country all these leading factors—the liberal bourgeoisie in the most advanced countries, and the feudal military cliques in the second group of these countries—are gradually trying to make some compromise with the imperial overlord and imperial capitalism.

This position brings us face to face with a problem as to whether there is a possibility of another social factor going into this struggle and wresting the leadership from the hands of those who are leading the struggle so far.

We find in these countries where capitalism is sufficiently developed that such a social factor is already coming into existence. We find in these countries the creation of a proletarian class, and where the penetration of capitalism had undermined the peasantry, bringing into existence a vast mass of poor and landless agrarian toilers. This mass is being gradually drawn into the struggle which is no longer purely economic, but which assumes every day a more and more political character. So also in the countries where feudalism and the feudal military cliques are still holding leadership, we find the development and growth of an agrarian movement. In every conflict, in every struggle, we find that the interests of imperial capital are identical with the native landowning and feudal class, and that therefore when the masses of the people rise, when the national movement assumes revolutionary proportions, it threatens not only the imperial capital and foreign overlordship, but it finds also the native upper class allied with foreign exploiters.

Hence we see in the colonial countries a traingular fight developing, a fight which is directed at the same time against foreign imperialism and the native upper class which directly or indirectly strengthens and gives support to foreign imperialism.

And this is the fundamental issue of the thing that we have to find out. How the native bourgeoisie and the native upper class, whose interest conflicts with imperialism or whose economic development is obstructed by imperial domination, can be encouraged and helped to undertake a fight. We have to find out how the objective revolutionary significance of these factors can be utilized. At the same time we must keep it definitely in mind that these factors can operate only so far and no further. We must know that they will go to a certain extent and then they try to stop the revolution. We have already seen this in practical experience in almost all the countries. A review of the movement in all Eastern countries in the last few years would have helped us to develop our point, but the time at our disposal will not permit that. However, I believe most of you are fairly well acquainted with the development of the movement in those countries. You know how the movement in Egypt and India had been brought to a standstill by the timidity, the hesitation of the bourgeoisie, how a great revolutionary movement which involved the wide masses of the peasantry and the working class and which constituted a serious menace to imperialism, could not produce any very serious damage to imperialism, simply because the leadership of this movement was in the hands of the bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie was divided into two parts—the upper layer, which was developed industrially and owning big industrial and commercial interests, interlinked with imperial capital, found it dangerous for their extension, and therefore went to the imperialist thus constituting itself a positive obstruction to the revolutionary nationalist movement. The other section with weak social background, did not have the determination, the courage, to put itself at the head of this big revolutionary movement to lead it forward, and the movement consequently, betrayed and misled by these elements, has come to its present period of depression.

Then, on the other hand, we have the example of the Turkish struggle. This struggle is contemporary and you know how the imminent victory of the Turkish people has not been carried on to its logical consequences by the feudal military clique which stands at its head today. The ultimate victory of the Turkish people, the complete political and economic liberation of the Turkish nation, has been and is going to be compromised in order to safeguard the interests of the small feudal military clique which has found it convenient to sell itself to one group of imperialists as against another group. That clique found it convenient to ally with one group of imperialists against another. This might lead to the aggrandizement of this group and to the enthronement of Mustapha Kemal Pasha in place of the Sultan who was largely in the hands of British imperialism, but it does not solve the Turkish national problem in any way. And we know that while two or three months ago the revolutionary elements all over the world. were hailing the victories of Mustapha Kemal Pasha, we now have the news that Kemal in a free Turkey, freed by the efforts of the revolutionary workers and peasants, is brutally persecuting the latter. Hence it is proved that although the bourgeoisie and the feudal military clique in one or other of these countries can assume the leadership of the nationalist revolutionary struggle, there comes a time when these people are bound to betray the movement and become a counter-revolutionary force. Unless we are prepared to train politically the other social element which is objectively more revolutionary to step into their places and assume the leadership, the ultimate victory of the nationalist struggle becomes problematical for the time being.

Although two years ago we did not think of this problem so clearly, this tendency remained there as an objective tendency, and today, as a result of that, we have in almost all Eastern countries communist parties, political parties of the masses. We know that these communist parties in most of these countries cannot be called communist parties in the Western sense, but their existence proves that social factors are there, demanding political parties, not bourgeois political parties, but political parties which will express and reflect the demands, interests, aspirations of the masses of the people, peasants and workers, as against that kind of nationalism which merely stands for the economic development and the political aggrandizement of the native bourgeoisie.

The existence of these communist parties in these Eastern countries and their historic role become more significant when we look at the matter from the other point of view, when we look at it from the point of view that, on account of the misfortune that the bourgeoisie came into the field in the colonial and semi-colonial countries a little too late (one hundred and fifty years later), they are not going to play the role of liberators, because they will and can go so far and no farther. Therefore the nationalist revolutionary movement in these countries where millions and millions must have national liberation—must free themselves economically and politically from imperialism before they can progress further—is not going to be successful under the leadership of the bourgeoisie.

Therefore we find the necessity of these communist parties, which at the present moment cannot be called more than nuclei, but are destined to play a big role in so far as they will assume the leadership of the national revolutionary struggle when it is deserted and betrayed by the bourgeoisie. They will be able to carry on the struggle for liberation against imperialism. They alone will be in a position to lead the colonial peoples and oppressed nationalities to the conquest of complete political and economic independence.

These parties are historically destined for and socially capable of this task because they are based on the objectively most revolutionary factor, viz., the peasants and workers—the factor which has no interest in common with imperialism and, whose social position and economic conditions cannot be improved in any way so long as these countries are under capitalist imperialism.

It is under the leadership, therefore, of the workers and peasants, a political party representing the workers and peasants, that the national revolutionary struggle can come to final victory.

Now comrades, as this necessity of organizing Communist Parties in these countries brings us to the program and tactics of these Communist Parties, I should point out the necessity that while the Communist International is discussing the problem of a program it should pay serious attention to this, in view of the fact that to develop the program of the International in the Eastern countries is more complicated. It is more complicated because (unfortunately it is to be confessed) our comrades of the Communist International so far have devoted very little time to the study of these questions.

Before we can have a program on this question, develop a line of tactics which could be adopted by the Communist Parties in Eastern countries, it is necessary that the various sections of the International pay a little more attention to and study these questions a little more carefully. It should not be gratuitous work on their part, because capitalism, the power of the bourgeoisie, in their own countries is today very closely interlinked with the situation in the colonial countries, because imperialism today is trying to save itself by developing colonial countries industrially. During the war, imperialism, particularly British imperialism, found it necessary to slacken its monopoly rights over the economic and industrial life of the backward colonial countries. So, a country like India, which was maintained as an agricultural reserve, as a source of raw material for British industries for more than one hundred and fifty years, was allowed sufficient industrial development during the war. The dislocation of the capitalist equilibrium in Europe, forces imperialism to look out for new markets by which the equilibrium of world capitalism can be re-established. They are trying to find this in the colonial countries by developing industrially countries like India and China, they are trying to find the solution of the problem that way. Depending on the resources in the colonial countries, imperialism tries to carry its offensive against the European proletariat to a crushing victory. We must not lose sight of this tendency.

We may argue this way: Well, this cannot be done because imperialism means that colonial countries should be left in a backward state economically so that the goods manufactured in the metropolitan countries can be sold there. Yes, but that is a very mechanical way of looking on these things. We must not forget that if the coat-tail of the Chinaman is lengthened by a few inches the textile production of the world will have to be doubled. By industrial development the standard of living of 400 million Chinese can be raised and thus the textile production of the world doubled. Industrial development of China does not necessarily mean the contraction of production in the home countries. These countries when they are industrially developing must have machinery, etc. which they cannot produce themselves, and so while perhaps in certain kinds of goods the colonial market can be limited and reduced, yet so far as machinery is concerned they must be extended.

Then again that part of the production of England and other countries which used to be sold in Central and Western European markets must find new consumers, and this can be done in the colonial countries by developing the power of consumption.

So, you see the re-adjustment of imperial capital with the native capital in the colonial and semi-colonial countries will play a big part in the wide scheme of capitalist offensive. In order to be able to fight the capitalist offensive in European countries we must co-ordinate our forces with the movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

The experience of the last two years in co-ordinating our forces with the bourgeois nationalist parties in these countries shows that through the medium of these parties we can use and utilize the bourgeois revolutionary parties to the greatest extent.

This leads us to the question of the united anti-imperialist front. Side by side with the United Labour Front in the Western countries we must organize the united anti-imperialist front in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. The object of this anti-imperialist united front is to organize all the available revolutionary forces in a big united front against imperialism. The organization of this front, the experience of the last two years has shown us, could not be realized under the leadership of the bourgeois parties. So we have to develop our parties in these countries in order to take the lead in the organization of this front. Just as the tactics of united proletarian front leads to accumulation of organizational strength in the western countries and unmasks and discloses the treachery and compromising tactics of the Social-Democratic Party by bringing them into active conflict, so will the campaign of united anti-imperialist front in the colonial countries liberate the leadership of the movement from the timid and hesitating bourgeoisie and bring the masses more actively in the forefront, through the most revolutionary social elements which constitute the basis of the movement, thereby securing the final victory.*

* Vol. I, No. 8, 15 January, 1923. A verbatim record of Roy's report on the Eastern Question was published in Bulletin No.19 of 1 December, 1922, pp. 22–8, by the Press Bureau of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern, Moscow. In the *Advance-Guard* version reproduced here the first paragraph of the report as given in the Bulletin was left out. In that opening passage Roy rebuked the Congress for not devoting adequate time and attention to the Eastern Question. Both in the Bulletin, and the Advance-Guard reports there seems to be some passage missing in the paragraph beginning 'The bourgeoisie was . . . (p. 478). S. N. R.

Theses on the Eastern Question

(Adopted by the Fourth Congress of the Communist International)

1. The Growth of the Revolutionary Movement in the East.

The Second Congress of the Communist International basing itself on the work of Soviet Administration in the East and the growth of the Nationalist-Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies, outlined the principles of the nationalist-colonial question in the period of prolonged struggle between imperialism and the Proletarian Dictatorship.

Since that time the struggle against imperialist oppression in the colonies and semi-colonial countries has become considerably more acute as a consequence of the deepening postwar political and economical crises of imperialism.

Evidence of this is served by 1) the collapse of the Sèvres Treaty on the partition of Turkey and the possibility of the complete restoration of the national and political independence of the latter; 2) the stormy growth of a nationalist-revolutionary movement in India, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Morocco, China and Korea; 3) the hopeless internal crisis of Japanese imperialism giving rise to the rapid growth of elements of a bourgeois-democratic revolution in the country and the transition by the Japanese proletariat to independent class struggle; 4) the awakening of the labour movement in all countries of the East and the formation of Communist Parties almost in all parts of the East.

The facts enumerated above, indicate a change in the social basis of the revolutionary movement in the colonies. This change leads to the anti-militarist struggle becoming more acute; this struggle is no longer being led exclusively by the feudal classes, while the national bourgeoisie is preparing to compromise with imperialism.

The imperialist war of 1914–1918 and the prolonged crisis which followed it, particularly in Europe, has weakened the power of the Great Powers over the colonies. On the other hand, these same circumstances in narrowing the economic bases and spheres of influence of world capitalism have rendered imperialist rivalry for the colonies more acute and in this way have disturbed the equilibrium of the whole world imperialist system (the fight for oil, Anglo-French conflict in Asia-Minor, the Japanese-American rivalry for the domination of the Pacific Ocean, etc.).

It is precisely this weakening of imperialist pressure in the colonies together with the increasing rivalry between various imperialist groups, that has facilitated the development of native capitalism in the colonies and semi-colonial countries which are outgrowing the narrow framework of the domination of the imperialist Great Powers. Until now the Great Powers, in maintaining their monopoly rights to secure excess profits from trade, industry, and the taxation of backward countries, have striven to isolate these from world economic intercourse. The demand for national and economic independence put forward by the nationalist movements in the colonies serves to express the needs of bourgeois development in these countries. The growth of native productive forces in these colonies, therefore, causes an irreconcilable antagonism of interests between them and world imperialism; for the essence of imperialism consists in using the varying levels of development of productive forces in various parts of the economic world for the purpose of extracting monopolist excess profits.

2. *Condition of the Struggle*

The backwardness of the clonies is reflected in the motley character of the nationalist revolutionary movements against imperialism, which in their turn, reflect the varying states of transition from feudal and feudal-patriarchal relations to capitalism. This variety of conditions makes its impression upon the ideology of these movements. To the extent that capitalism in the colonial countries arises and develops from feudal bases in hybrid, imperfect and intermediary forms, which give predominance above all, to merchant capitalism, the rise of bourgeois democracy from feudal-bureaucratic and feudal-agrarian elements, proceeds often by devious and protracted paths. This represents the chief obstacle to successful mass struggles against imperialist oppression, as the foreign imperialist in all the backward countries convert the feudal (and partly also the semi-feudal, semi-bourgeois) upper classes of native society into agents of their domination (military governors — Tutchuns — in China, the native aristocracy and tax farmers—the Zemindars and Taluqdars in India, the feudal bureaucracy in Persia, the agrarian-planter capitalist formation in Egypt, etc.).

For that reason the dominant classes in the colonies and the semi-colonial countries are incapable and unwilling to lead the struggle against imperialism as this struggle is converted into a revolutionary mass movement. Only where the feudal-patriarchal system has not decayed to such an extent as to completely separate the native aristocracy from the mass of the people, as among the nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples, can those upper classes take up the active leadership of the struggle against imperialist violence (Mesopotamia, Morocco, Mongolia).

In Moslem countries the nationalist movement at first expresses its ideology in religious-political watchwords of pan-Islamism, which enables diplomats and officials of the Great Powers to exploit the prejudices and ignorance of the masses of the people to combat this movement. (British imperialism's game with pan-Islamism and Pan-Arabism, the British plan of transferring the Kaliphate to India and the gambling of French imperialism with its 'Moslem sympathies'). With the growth and expansion of the national liberation movement the religious-political watchwords of pan-Islamism are substituted by concrete political demands. The struggle for the separation of the temporal power from the Kaliphate which took place in Turkey recently is evidence of this.

The main task common to all national revolutionary movements is to bring about national unity and achieve political independence. The real and consistent solution of this depends on the extent to which the national movement in any particular country is capable of attracting to itself the toiling masses and break off all connection with the reactionary feudal elements and include in its program the social demands of the masses.

While being completely aware that the will of a nation for political independence in varying historical conditions can be expressed by the most diverse classes, the Communist International supports all national revolutionary movements against imperialism. At the same time it does not lose sight of the fact that only a consistent revolutionary line of policy based on the active support of the masses, and the unreserved break with all advocates of compromise with imperialism in the interests of maintaining class domination, can lead the oppressed masses to victory. The connection between the native bourgeoisie and the feudal reactionary elements enables the imperialists to make wide use of feudal anarchy, the rivalry between various leaders and tribes, the antagonism between town and country, the struggle between castes and national religious sects etc., for the purpose of disorganizing the popular movement (China, Persia, Kurdistan, Mesopotamia).

3. Agrarian Question

In the majority of countries in the East (India, Persia, Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia) the agrarian question is of primary importance in the struggle for emancipation from the domination of the despotism of the Great Powers. Exploiting and ruining the peasant majorities in the backward nations, imperialism deprives them of the elementary means of existence while the low development of industry scattered among a few junctional points in the country renders it impossible for it to absorb the superfluous agrarian population which at the same time has no means of emigrating. The peasants remaining on the land are pauperized and converted into serfs. While in the advanced countries prior to the war, industrial crises served as regulators of social production, this function in the colonies is performed by famine. Vitally interested in securing the greatest profits with the least expenditure of capital, imperialism strives all it can to maintain in the backward countries the feudal usurious form of exploiting labour power. In some countries like India, it assumes the monopoly rights of the native feudal State to the land and converts the land tribute into feudal dues and the Zemindars and Taluqdars into its agents. In other countries it extracts ground rent through the native organization of large landowners, as is the case in Persia, Morocco, Egypt etc. The struggle for the emancipation of the land from feudal dues and feudal obstacles thus assumes the character of a struggle for national emancipation against imperialism and feudal large land ownership. (Examples of this are the Moplah rising against the landowners and the British in India in the autumn of 1921, and the revolt of the Sikhs in 1922.)

Only the agrarian revolution aiming at the expropriation of the large landowners can rouse the vast peasant masses destined to have a decisive influence in the struggle against imperialism. The fear of agrarian watchwords on the part of the bourgeois nationalists (India, Persia, Egypt) is evidence of the close ties existing between the native bourgeoisie with the large feudal and feudal-bourgeois landowners and their ideological and political dependence upon the latter. The hesitation and wavering of this class must be used by the revolutionary elements for systematic criticism and exposure of the lack of resolution of the bourgeois leaders of the nationalist movement. It is precisely this lack of resolution that hinders the organization of the toiling masses as is proved by the bankruptcy of the tactics of non-cooperation in India.

The revolutionary movement in the backward countries of the East cannot be successful unless it is based on the action of the masses of the peasantry. For that reason the revolutionary parties in all Eastern countries must define their agrarian program which should demand the complete abolition of feudalism and its survivals expressed in the forms of large land ownership and tax farming. In order that the peasant masses may be drawn into active participation in the struggle for national liberation, it is necessary to proclaim the radical reform of the basis of land ownership. It is necessary also to compel the bourgeois nationalist parties to the greatest extent possible to adopt this revolutionary agrarian program.

4. *The Labour Movement in the East*

The young Labour movement in the East is a product of the development of native capitalism during the last few years. Hitherto the working class in the East, even its fundamental nucleus has been in a state of transition, on the path from small handicraft to large capitalist industry. In so far as the bourgeois nationalist intelligentsia draws the revolutionary movement of the working class into the struggle against imperialism, this intelligentsia provides the leaders for the embryonic trade union organizations and their sections in the first stages of their development. In the first stages, these movements do not extend beyond the limits of the 'common national' interests of bourgeois democracy (strikes against imperialist bureaucracy and administration in China and India). Frequently, as was already shown at the Second Congress of the Comintern, representatives of bourgeois nationalism, exploiting the moral and political authority of Soviet Russia, and playing to the class instincts of the workers, clothed their bourgeois democratic strivings in 'socialist' and 'communist' forms in order by these means, sometimes unconsciously, to divert the embryonic proletarian organizations from the direct tasks of class organizations (the Eshil Ordu, in Turkey, which painted pan-Turkism in communist colours, the 'State Socialism' advocated by some representatives of the Kuo-Min-Tan in China).

In spite of this, the trade union and political movement of the working class in the backward countries has made considerable progress in recent years. The formation of independent proletarian class parties in almost all the Eastern countries, is a remarkable fact, although the overwhelming majority of these parties must still undergo considerable internal reorganization in order to free themselves from amateurity and the forms of close circles and other defects. The fact that the Communist International esteemed the potential importance of the labour movement in the East right from the very beginning, is a fact of colossal importance, as it is a clear expression of the real international unity of the proletariat of the whole world under the banner of communism. The Second and Two and a Half Internationals to this very day, have not found support in a single backward country precisely because they play the part of 'servants' to European and American imperialism.

5. *The General Tasks of the Communist Parties in the East*

While the bourgeois nationalists regard the labour movement merely from the point of view of its importance as a means for securing victory for themselves, the international peoletariat regards the young labour movement of the East from the point of view of its revolutionary future. Under capitalism the backward countries cannot achieve modern technique and culture without paying enormous tribute in the form of barbarous exploitation and oppression for the advantage of the capitalists of the Great Powers. Alliance with the proletariat of advanced countries is dictated not merely by the interests of a common struggle against imperialism but also by the fact that only by a victory of the proletariat of the advanced countries can the workers of the East obtain unselfish aid in the development of their productive forces. An alliance with the proletariat in the West will lay the path towards an International Federation of Soviet Republics. The Soviet system, for the backward nations, represents the least painful form of transition from primitive conditions of existence to the highest culture of communism, destined to take the place of the capitalist method of production and distribution all over the world. This is proved by the experience of the development of the Soviet system in the liberated colonies formerly comprising the Russian Empire. Only a Soviet form of administration is able to guarantee the consistent fulfilment of the agrarian peasant revolution. The specific conditions of agriculture in certain countries of the East (artificial irrigation) maintained in the past by a peculiar organization of collective co-operation on a feudal-patriarchal basis and disrupted by predatory capitalism, demand also a State organization of such a type as would be able systematically and in an organized manner to serve public needs. As a consequence of special climatic and historical conditions the co-operation of small producers in the East is destined to play an important role in the transition period.

The objective tasks of colonial revolutions exceed the limit of bourgeois democracy by the very fact that a decisive victory is incompatible with the domination of world imperialism. While the native bourgeoisie and bourgeois intelligentsia are the pioneers of colonial revolutionary movements, with the entry of proletarian and semi-proletarian peasant masses into these movements however, the rich bourgeoisie and bourgeois landlords begin to leave it as the social interests of the masses assume prominence. The young proletariat of the colonies is still confronted by a prolonged struggle over a whole historical epoch, a struggle against imperialist exploitation and against its own ruling classes, striving to secure in their own hands the monopoly of all the advantages of industrial and cultural development and to maintain the masses of the toilers in their previous 'primitive' state.

The struggle to secure influence over the peasant masses should prepare the native proletariat for the role of political leadership. Only after having accomplished this preparatory work on its own training and that of the social classes closely allied to itself, will it be possible to advance against bourgeois democracy which, amidst the conditions of the backward East, bears a more hypocritical character than in the West.

The refusal of the communists in the colonies to participate in the struggle against imperialist oppression on the pretext of alleged 'defence' of independent class interests, is opportunism of the worst kind calculated only to discredit the proletarian revolution in the East. Not less harmful must be recognized the attempt to isolate oneself from the immediate and everyday interests of the working class for the sake of 'national unity' or 'civil peace' with bourgeois democracy. The communist and working class parties in the colonies and semi-colonial countries are confronted by a twofold task: on the one hand to fight for the most radical solutions of the problems of bourgeois democratic revolution, directed to the conquest of political independence, and on the other to organize the workers and peasants to fight for their special class interests and to take advantage of the antagonism existing in the nationalist bourgeois democratic camp. In putting forward special demands, these parties stimulate and release revolutionary energy which finds no outlet in bourgeois liberal demands. The working class in the colonies and semi-colonial countries must know that only by deepening and extending the struggle against the imperialism of the Great Powers, can its role as a revolutionary leader be fulfilled. On the other hand, the economic and political organization and the political training of the working class and the semi-proletarian classes will facilitate and extend the revolutionary scope of the struggle against imperialism.

The Communist Parties in the colonies and semi-colonial countries in the East, which are still in a more or less embryonic stage, must take part in every movement that gives them access to the masses. At the same time however, they must conduct an energetic campaign against the patriarchal and craft prejudices and bourgeois influences in the labour unions, in order to protect these embryonic organizations from reformist tendencies and in order to convert them into mass fighting organizations. They must exert all their efforts to organize the numerous agricultural labourers and artisans of both sexes on the basis of defending their immediate everyday interests.

6. *The United Anti-Imperialist Front*

While in the West amidst the conditions of the transition period, which is a period of organized accumulation of strength, the watchword of the United Labour.Front was put forward, in the colonial East it is at present necessary to put forward the watchword of a United Anti-Imperialist Front. The expediency of these tactics is dictated by the prospects of a prolonged struggle against world imperialism demanding the mobilization of all revolutionary elements. The mobilization becomes all the more necessary from the fact that the native ruling classes are inclined to make compromises with the foreign capitalists directed against the fundamental interests of the masses of the people. Just as the watchword of the United Labour Front in the West facilitates the exposure of the social-democratic betrayal of the interests of the proletariat, so the watchword of the United Anti-Imperialist Front will facilitate the exposure of the wavering and hesitation of certain bourgeois nationalist groups in the East. This watchword will also help to develop the revolutionary will and to make more definite the class consciousness of the masses of the toilers and bring them into the fornt ranks of the struggle, not only against imperialism but against all survivals of feudalism.

The labour movement in the colonies and semi-colonial countries must first of all secure for itself the position of an independent factor in the common Anti-Imperialist Front. Only on the basis of the recognition of this independence and the maintenance of complete independence is a temporary agreement with bourgeois democracy permissible and necessary. The proletariat must support and put forward partial demands such as: independent democratic republic; abolition of all feudal rights and privileges, and enfranchisement of women etc., in view of the fact that the present correlation of forces does not permit it to carry out its Soviet program. At the same time it must strive to put forward such demands as will assist in establishing the closest possible contact between the peasantry and semi-proletarian masses and the labour movement. To explain to the masses of the toilers the necessity for an alliance with the international proletariat and the Soviet Republics is one of the most important tasks of the tactics of the Anti-Imperialist Front. The colonial revolution can be victorious and defend its gains only in conjunction with the proletarian revolution in the advanced countries.

The danger of an agreement being arrived at between the bourgeois nationalists and one or several of the rival imperialist powers in the semi-colonial countries (China, Persia) or in countries striving to secure political independence by exploiting the rivalry between the imperialists (Turkey) is greater than in the colonies. Such an agreement would signify an unequal division of power between the native ruling classes and the imperialists, and under the cloak of a formal independence will leave the country in the same position of a buffer semi-colonial state subordinate to world imperialism.

Recognizing the permissibility and inevitability of partial and temporary compromises for the purpose of securing a respite in the revolutionary struggle against imperialism, the working class must, however, irreconcilably resist every attempt at avowed or tacit division of power between the imperialists and the native ruling classes aiming at the preservation by the latter of their class privileges. The demand for a close alliance between the proletariat and Soviet Republics serves as the banner of the united anti-imperialist front. Simultaneously with the advocacy of this demand, a most determined struggle must be conducted for a most democratic political regime, in order to undermine the power of the most politically and socially reactionary elements and preserve the freedom of organization for the toilers in their struggle for their class interests (the demand for democratic republics, agrarian reforms, reforms of taxation, the basis of wide self-government, labour legislation, the protection of child labour, the protection of mothers and infants etc.). Even in independent Turkey, the working class does not enjoy freedom of organization, and this may serve as a typical example of the attitude of the bourgeois nationalists towards the proletariat.

7. *The Tasks of the Protetariat on the Pacific Coast*

The necessity for the establishment of an anti-imperialist front is dictated also by the constant growth of imperialist rivalry. This rivalry has today assumed such acute forms, that a fresh world war, the arena of which will be the Pacific Ocean, is inevitable unless an international revolution forestalls it.

The Washington Conference was an attempt to obviate this danger, but as a matter of fact it succeeded only in rendering the antagonism between the imperialists more profound and acute. The recent conflict between Wu-Pei-Fu and Chang-Tso-Lin in China was a direct consequence of the failure of Japanese and Anglo-American capitalism to harmonize their interests at Washington. The new world war which menaces the world will affect not only Japan, America and England, but also other capitalist Powers (France, Holland etc.) and it threatens to be even more destructive than the war of 1914-1918.

The task of the communist parties in the colonial and semi-colonial countries on the Pacific Coast is to conduct an extensive propaganda to explain to the masses the oncoming danger, to call upon them to take up an active struggle for national liberation and to teach them to regard Soviet Russia as the bulwark of all the oppressed and exploited masses.

The communist parties in the imperialist countries: America, Japan, England, Australia and Canada, in view of the threatening danger must not limit themselves merely to a propaganda against war, but must exert all their efforts to remove all the disruptive factors from the labour movement in their respective countries and to prevent the capitalists taking advantage of national and racial antagonisms.

This factor is the immigration question and cheap coloured labour.

The system of indentured labour, to this very day, is the main system of recruiting coloured workers for the sugar plantations of the Southern Pacific to which workers are transported from China and India. This fact has compelled the workers in the imperialist countries to demand anti-immigration laws against coloured workers as is the case in America and Australia. These prohibition laws deepen the antagonism between white and coloured workers and break and weaken the unity of the labour movement.

The communist parties of America, Canada and Australia must conduct an energetic campaign against anti-immigration laws and must explain to the masses of the proletatriat in these countries that these laws by arousing national hatreds, in the last resource only damage them.

On the other hand, the capitalists desire to repeal the anti-immigration laws in order to maintain the free import of cheap labour, and thus force down the wages of the white workers. This attempted offensive of the capitalists can be successfully averted only by the immigrant workers being absorbed in the existing white labour unions. At the same time the demand must be put forward for raising the wages of coloured workers to the level of white workers. Such tactics will expose the plans of the capitalists and at the same time clearly show to the coloured that the international proletariat has no racial prejudices.

In order to carry out these tactics, the representatives of the revolutionary proletariat of the countries of the Pacific should gather at a Pan-Pacific Conference in order to work out correct lines of action and to decide on the proper forms of organization for the purpose of uniting all the proletarians among the races of the Pacific.

8. The Tasks of the Communist Parties in the Home Countries

The great importance of the colonial revolutionary movements for the cause of the international proletarian revolution makes necessary an intensification of the work in the colonies, particularly by the communist parties of the imperialist countries.

French imperialism is basing all its calculations on the suppression of the proletarian revolutionary struggle in France and Europe, by using its colonial slaves as the fighting reserve of the counter-revolution.

British and American imperialism continue to divide the labour movement by maintaining on their side the aristocracy of labour by promises of a share in their excess profits obtained by the exploitation of the colonies.

Every communist party in the countries possessing colonies must undertake the task of organizing systematic ideological and material assistance to the labour and revolutionary movement in the colonies. They must carry out a persistent and determined struggle against the quasi-socialist colonizing tendencies prevailing among certain categories of well-paid European workers in the colonies. European communist workers in the colonies must strive to rally around themselves the native proletariat and gain its confidence by concrete economic demands (equal pay for white and native workers, protection of labour, labour insurance etc.).

The formation of exclusive European communist organizations in the colonies (Egypt, Algiers) is a concealed form of colonialism and is an aid to imperialist interests. The formation of communist organizations on national lines, is a contradiction to the principle of proletarian internationalism. All parties belonging to the Communist International must unceasingly explain to the masses of toilers the importance of the struggle against imperialist domination in the backward countries. The communist parties working in the imperialist countries should set a special colonial committee of their E.C.s. for this purpose. The aid rendered by the Communist International to the communist parties of the East, must be expressed in the first place by helping to establish a press, and the publication of journals and periodicals in the native languages. Special attention must be given to work among the European labour organizations and among occupational troops in the colonies. The communist parties in the imperialist countries must not allow a single opportunity to slip by to expose the predatory policy of their imperialist governments and their bourgeois and opportunist parties.*

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* Vol. I, No. 9, 1 February, 1923. The text of the 'Theses' in the German version is included in *Thesen und Resolutionen des IV Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale*, Hamburg 1923. Whether Roy prepared the draft or not, his important role in the preparation of the Theses is undisputed. S.N.R.

The World Outlook

The Fourth World Congress of the Communist International is over. It was a month in session and 394 delegates from 55 countries took part in it. The membership of the communist parties represented in the Congress was 2030675. This number did not include 12 - 13000000 workers practically belonging to the Communist International through the Red International of Labour Unions which also held the Second Congress simultaneously in this heart of the revolutionary world. The number of communists does, however, by no means portray the political influence of the large parties, and even of some of the small parties, in their respective countries. The political power of the communist parties is to be gauged by the influence they wield over the proletarian masses. The very fact that in a number of countries, particularly Germany, Czechoslovakia, Italy and Bulgaria, the struggle for political power rages between the communist party leading the proletariat on the one hand and a union of all the bourgeois parties on the other, testifies to the menacing position occupied by the communist today.

Even in the stoutest capitalist stronghold of Britain, Communism has become such a spectre that the Tories went into the last Elections with the knowledge that revolutionary labour was their only formidable enemy. And the sanctity of the Holy Shrine of Democracy, the British Parliament, has been violated. Two communists, one of them an Indian, have carried the Red Banner of Revolution therein. When the telegram announcing the victory of Newbold was received the whole Congress was as if it were electrified. Zinoviev declared: 'We do not overestimate the value of parlimentarism, but this victory has a significance for our principles. The Red Star appears to be rising in this most capitalist of all countries'. It is exactly what it means. Communism has spread its influence on the British working class. Had the Labour party been revolutionary enough (or should we say less counter-revolutionary) to take up boldly the challenge of the Tories and go to the polls with a clear programme of class war, the shakiness of the foundation of the capitalist structure would have been much more revealed.

What attraction had the British proletariat to vote for the Labour party when the latter's election programme was hardly to be distinguished from that of Asquith or even Lloyd George? While the Tories were holding out the hopes for an industrial stabilization, the Labour party also talked of a vague plan of Capital Levy, by which magic they promised it reach the same goal, namely, industrial stabilization. But a political party of the working class would have said something different, it would have taken up the challenge declaring itself 'Bolshevik' and shown how no patchwork could drag capitalism out of this chaos. Instead of leading the unemployed masses to revolution, the Labour party promises them a Parliamentary Commission. The Tories at least promised them employment and no wonder they secured a considerable working class vote. But a look at Westminster proves that in spite of the British labour party, the class war is thrust upon the reluctant shoulders of the pacifist labourites, a class war that cannot be shirked and that can only be fought under the banner of Communism. Hence, we say, even in Britain the revolution is on. The total eclipse of the Liberal party means the victory of stark reaction. The mask of democracy, law, constitutional government etc., which has been thrown away by the bourgeoisie in the continental countries like Germany and Italy, can also be seen through in the home of democracy. This is taking place under the pressure of growing revolutionary forces. Europe, and for that reason the whole world, is on fire.

Such is the situation in which the World Congress of the Communist International met. A review of the past year showed that the offensive started by capitalism all over the world is reaching the point of exhaustion. Therefore, it was decided that the time has come for the proletariat to assume the offensive. What should be the best tactics in the new stage of the fight was discussed at length. The campaign of a United Front initiated last winter in order to mobilize under the banner of the communist parties the largest possible bulk of the proletarian masses, had proved to be a very potential tactics in the period of transition from the defensive to the offensive . The influence of the communist party in many a country has immensely increased. The faith of the proletarian masses in the old Social Democratic Reformism has been shaken. The failure of the social democrats to join the united proletarian front against the capitalist offensive is responsible for it. In the actual fight for every day demands, the communists have proved to be the real and unflinching leaders of the working class. Before the determined attack of the communists the Centrists, who kept a considerable section of the proletariat under the spell of formidable phrases, have been driven into the arms of the social patriots, who today stand shoulder to shoulder with the reactionary bourgeoisie in the defence of the capitalist order. The Fourth World Congress enthusiastically received the news that the National Congress of the Factory Councils of Germany had been captured by the Communist party. Out of the 841 delegates to the Congress, 657 were communists. These delegates represent the millions of German workers in the factories. So, revolution has entered the ranks, in spite of the watchfulness of the reactionary Trade Union bureaucracy. In his report to the Congress of the German Factory Councils the communist leader Brandler said:

'Capitalism is in a state of decay, which is strikingly revealed in the disappearence of confidence in the durability of the capitalist system. The rise of Fascism is not a sign of strength, but rather weakness of the bourgeoisie, which can no longer rely upon the army and the middle class state officials. The workers are faced with only one alternative: either continued impoverishment amidst capitalist chaos, or through the chaos of revolutionary struggle to the glorious goal of socialism'.

The World Congress discussed the 'Capitalist Offensive' just at the moment in which reaction appeared to be sweeping Italy in the victory of Fascism, Germany in the debacle of the Social Democrats and the establishment of an extra-parliamentary fighting government, and in Britain by the conservative landslide in the elections. But these incidents were looked upon by the leaders of World Revolution assembled in the Congress as feats of exasperation on the part of the enemy. After reviewing in brief 'Five Years of Revolution' Lenin, completely recovered from his illness, declared: 'I am confident that the prospects for the world revolution are not merely favourable, but splendid'.

In proportion as the struggle sharpens and the days of decisive battles draw nearer, the Communist International becomes a more and more compact centralized fighting organ. In this Congress the idea that the Communist International is *One World Party* with sections in every country was very clearly felt. Never in the history of mankind there existed such a mighty organization with such a gigantic task and inspired with such a clear ideal. Little wonder that before the menacing spectre of this revolutionary giant, the capitalist world will lose all its senses and thus advance the day of its own doom. Russia, where the proletariat, led by the communists, have seized power and are holding it against overwhelming odds, is the base of this Great Army of World Revolution.

Facilities to buy and sell may convince the hearts of the bourgeoisie that the Russian revolution is dead; shops and restaurants along the thoroughfares may cast a shadow of doubt in the mind of the shallow observer, but one has to be in Russia on November the Seventh to see how the social basis of the revolution has widened. If you want to see where is the revolution, look at those workers in the street with guns slung on their shoulders. There is the revolution. It is this worker who controls the State. Go to the Universities to find them full of young workingmen and women ready to come and to rescue the new generation from the clutches of the reactionary intellectuals. Go to the clubs of the Young Communists to find boys and girls in their teens discussing intricate questions of all sorts. They are intellectually free. This is revolution. The Communist International is the personification of that force which will see that such conditions are established all over the world. The Fourth Congress has proved to be the First Congress of the Communist Party of the world preparing to enter the last decisive stage of the fight which will end in glorious victory, and a new era will dawn upon the world. It is fortunate to be among those remaking that world.*

Moscow, 10 Dec.

M.N. Roy

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* Vol. I, No. 9, 1 February 1923, signed M.N. Roy. Although these last items were published in *The Advance-Guard* issues of January and February, 1923 they are included in this volume since the events actually took place in November-December, 1922.

At the Fourth Congress out of 394 delegates, 340 had voting rights; the figures increased before the end of the Congress to 408 and 343 respectively, when Zinoviev reported 65 delegations from 62 countries. The Congress elected Roy as a Candidate-Member of the Comintern Executive (ECCI). It also affirmed that 'the ECCI is the supreme body of the entire communist movement and its decisions are binding on all affiliated parties', (Thesen und Resolutionen, IV, p. 5).

In May 1922, Lenin suffered his first stroke, but he recovered sufficiently to attend the Congress where he spoke on 'the possibility of retreat' and emphasized that 'the most important thing for all of us Russian and foreign communists alike, is to sit down and study'.

Shortly after, he had a second and more severe stroke, and the power-struggle began in earnest between Zinoviev, Trotsky and Stalin. S. N. R.

WHAT DO WE WANT

By
MANABENDRA NATH ROY

1922
EDITION DE LA LIBRARIE J.B. TARGET
GENEVE

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*The table of Contents together with pagination here follows the original edition of 1922. The book opened with a longish quotation from Wilhelm Liebknecht which is left out. Other passages left out in the text are indicated by dots (...). However, the major part of the book is reproduced. Words and passages emphasized in the 1922 edition are italicized. S.N.R.

Introduction

What do we want? It appears that today there is no room for this question. Why, everybody knows what we want. We want Swaraj; we want the freedom of our country. We are fighting for the right of the Indian people to live as a free nation, to rule itself, to determine its own destiny according to its own needs and desires. . . .

We must be free. The foreign rule which has heaped upon the Indian people outrageous insults added to grave injuries, economic and political, must be overthrown. And Swaraj, National Self-Government, must be established in its place. This is what we want. To want this, to sacrifice for it, to fight for it and to die if necessary is the duty of every Indian. Now is not the time to stop and think where we are going, what we want to achieve. It is decided, once and for all. We want freedom. Swaraj, free national existence, is our goal.

So far so good. We want Swaraj because it will put an end to our sufferings and miseries. We have been told so by those who are leading us, by the leaders of the nation, by those leaders who are moved by the sufferings of the people and who seek a way to lead us out of this suffering. . . .

Why do we, the masses of the Indian people, need to be happier than we are at present? What ails us now? If we know what we lack, then we will know what we want. The masses of India are poor. All the year round they are practically starving. There are lakhs and lakhs of toilers in the country who never get enough to live on, who never have their hunger satisfied once in their lives. There are thousands and hundreds of thousands of men, women and children living like dogs in dirty holes, in all the great cities; but in these very cities there are magnificent palatial houses occupied by only a few rich people. These houses are built by the workers, who lay the bricks, whose labour has raised these proud structures by putting one stone upon another. Have we not seen their wives and daughters carry piles of brick and jars of water on their heads, stooped with exhaustion, to build these houses? The comfortable beds, tables, chairs, carpets and other furniture that adorn these houses have also been made by the workers. Some have cut the wood, others have carried it, still others have sawed, fashioned and polished it. But the people who made these things cannot use them. Those who build the palaces live in huts; those who manufacture beautiful and comfortable furniture sleep on old and dirty mats. Why is this so? Why should it be so? If it has been so in the past, why should not the future be otherwise? If we want the

Indian people to be any happier than they are today, this state of things must change. We must change it. So this is the reason we want Swaraj; *We want Swaraj in order to change the condition of the Indian masses.*

Why do the people of India, the toiling masses, suffer? Why are they always hungry? Why do their children go naked? We must study the cause of these evils because we want to put an end to all this sadness. We want our people to have enough to eat, decent rooms to live in and a clean bed to sleep in after the day's labour. They need clothing to protect themselves from the sun, rain and cold; they would like to have their children educated. We are struggling for Swaraj to secure these things for the masses of our countrymen.

The Indian peasant tills the soil, sows the seed, watches the crop until harvest-time. *But the fruits of his toil are not his.* He has to pay rent to the Zemindar, taxes to the Government, interest to the moneylender, presents to the Gumastha, contributions to the ceremonies in the household of the landlords, and many other dues. When everything is paid, nothing remains to him to meet expenses for the coming year. We want to change this state of affairs. *The man who produces the wheat, rice, jawar and other foodgrains for the whole country to live on, must not go hungry.* The Indian peasants today are hungry because the foreign government that rules the country is based upon the right of exploitation. In order to change the life of the peasant masses, Swaraj must provide so that they are not deprived of their produce for the benefit of the landlords and traders.

Look at the large cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Cawnpur etc. Lakhs of workers are performing all kinds of labour in the factories, railways, docks, jetties, shops and godowns. If they stopped working for a single day, these busy cities would lie dead. Not a wheel in the factories would run; not a single railway train would run, not a bundle from the jetties would be loaded or unloaded; the cities would lie in darkness at night, and water would cease to flow from the taps. So who is the life of these large cities? *The life of the cities is the toil of the workers.* Yet these workers are despised as inferior to the rich who live in palaces, ride in motor cars, travel in first class carriages and eat such food as the workers never even see. Why should we permit things to continue when we know that everything is produced by the worker, that everything lies dead if he stops his work? It is clear that if the cities are so rich and prosperous, it is the workers who have made them so. The factories produce enormous quantities of clothes, shoes, umbrellas and other articles of use and pleasure; the owners get rich by selling these things; but the workers who manufacture them by their labour go naked, barefooted, and starve. Why should they not enjoy what they make? The peasant and the worker bear all the burdens, they produce the food, clothing and everything necessary for life; but they themselves have not enough to eat, a decent place to live in, sufficient clothes to wear. Who is responsible for this state of affairs? *The present system of government is responsible*. We want Swaraj, because we believe that under a national government these conditions will be changed.

There are people who tell us that some are rich and some are poor because God has made them so, and since the present state of affairs is ordained by God, it is a sin to rebel against them. They tell us to believe in divine Goodness, Love and Justice, and to resign ourselves patiently to the Will of God. So we have been taught from time immemorial. But since God is said to be good, loving and just, how could He approve of such an unequal system which permits the few rich to exploit and live on the labour of the many poor, who work all their lives and starve and suffer in order that their masters may enjoy and make merry? No, people are not rich because God has made them so, but because they *live on the unpaid labour of the workers*. The people who work produce food and manufactured goods which belong not to them, but to the rich landlord or manufacturer, who pays only a miserable daily wage to the worker, but who sells what the worker produces for many times more than the wages he receives. *The rich man grows richer on the profits made out of the toil of the starving worker*. This is a kind of robbery, and such robbery cannot be approved of by God. We want to put an end to it. *The Indian workers and peasants must not starve and go naked while the idle rich live in luxury*. This is what we want.

So it is not Swaraj *by itself* that we are striving for; we want something else which we expect and have been told, will come *as a result* of Swaraj. We want to overthrow foreign rule in order to improve our miserable condition. We want to drive the foreign exploiter out of our country because we will no longer suffer patiently and uncomplainingly, as in the past. We are ready now to fight for our rights. We will no longer consent to toil all our lives for others, and starve. We will not let a handful of people grow rich by depriving us of the fruits of our toil. Now we have learned how the rich man prospers on the unpaid labour of the poor worker. This is what is meant by *exploitation*. Today most of us work for the foreigner, who robs us of the fruit of our labour, but there are many Indians who are employed by our own countrymen, and their condition is no better than that of the people who work for the English. So *nationality makes no difference; the employers exploit the workers, just as the landlords rob the cultivators, irrespective of nationality*.

Why is it that the factory-owner, employer and Zemindar rob the workers and peasants, and in what way do they rob? The employer pays the worker wages, and the peasant pays rent for the land which belongs to the Zemindar. So it seems that the employer pays the worker for his labour, and the Zemindar takes only his due from the cultivator. Yes, this is what we have been taught; the workers and peasants of every country are taught the same. The employer pays the worker wages. True. But don't we know how much profit he makes for himself by selling the goods produced by the labour of the worker? Whence does this profit come? The factories may stand idle for months and months; the trains may lie in the railway stations for days and days; the goods may be stacked in the godowns and jetty-sheds and the capitalists who employ the workers for wages may be the owner of them all. *But does any one of these produce profit till the worker comes to move them*? No, it is neither the factories nor the railways nor the goods nor anything else that gives the employer profit; *the only source of profit is the unpaid labour of the worker*. The worker works ten hours and produces goods which are sold for many times more money than he receives in wages. Therefore, the wealth that goes to the employer in the form of profit belongs to the worker. Without his labour, nothing is produced; cloth is not woven, yarn is not spun; shoes are not made; leather is not tanned; oil is not pressed; wheat is not ground; railways do not run; coal is not dug; harvests are not reaped. *Without human labour, nothing is produced which can be bought, sold or exchanged, and it is from buying, selling and exchanging that profit is made*. Since everything of value is produced by those who work, the wealth appropriated as profit by the employer belongs by right to the worker. If the worker received the full value in wages of the goods he produces, no profit would be left for the idle employer. *The employer makes profit only by robbing the worker of his dues; wages paid to the worker are much less than the value of the goods created by his labour*.

The majority of the Indian people—those who earn their living by selling their labour-power—are in such a pitiable condition because the British Government is based on the principle of *capitalist exploitation*, whereby the labourer is deprived by the employer of the greater part of the value that he produces. Therefore, what we want is not only a change of *government*, but the end of the *system* which permits the exploitation of man by man. Unless the system is changed the material condition of the majority of the Indian people will not be improved appreciably. *We want a Swaraj which will guarantee to the worker the full value of what he produces*.

Likewise is the case with the Zemindar. He owns the land, but it is not his labour which makes it bear fruit. Nothing is produced without the toil of the cultivator. Since the labour of the peasant produces all crops, the product of the soil should go to the producer. Everybody knows how the landlord grows rich on the rent and contributions that he wrings from his tenants. So it is clear that the landlord gets his wealth, not by his own labour, but by depriving the cultivator of the fruits of his toil. Nobody created the Zemindar as owner of the land; he did not bring it with him from another world. Why should the land belong to him and not to the man who cultivates it? Why should he have the right to force rent and tribute from the man who makes the soil bear fruit? It is again because of the system of exploitation, based upon robbery, which permits the idle to live in luxury and forces the worker to starve and suffer. *The worker is the producer of all wealth. Those who produce food for all should not go hungry. Those who manufacture cloth should not go naked. Those who build palatial houses and prosperous cities should not live in dens and holes like animals.*

The Indian people are fighting and must fight for Swaraj because *political independence is the first step to economic freedom and social emancipation.*

We want to win national independence in order to put an end to all economic slavery and social bondage.

We are determined to overthrow foreign rule in order to end all class rule. We have declared war on the system that permits the idle rich to thrive on the toil of the industrious worker.

We demand that Labour, the creator of all wealth, shall cease to be despised and exploited, shall cease to produce wealth whose profits swell the purses of the capitalist class. We want labour to cease to be the slaves of capital, and for this it is necessary to end the system upon which capitalism is based.

PART I

Political Independence

We want, first of all and as soon as possible, political independence, because it is the first step towards our goal. But we must know that merely the overthrow of foreign rule will not bring us all we lack today and all that is indispensable in order that the masses of the Indian people shall live like human beings. Why are we determined to overthrow the British Government? Because it is based on the principle against which everyone who lives by honest labour must rebel. It is based upon the right of the possessing class to exploit the expropriated toiler.

The task of a government is to administer the affairs of the country. If the government is not a part of the country, it cannot execute its task in accordance with the interests of the inhabitants. In order to safeguard the people's interests, the government should be controlled by them; it should represent the people. In other words, the people of a country administer their own affairs through the medium of a government which is constituted by means of elected representatives; any government not so constituted, not based on the principle of elected representation, cannot take care of the interests of the community.

The British Government, which has been ruling India for more than a hundred and fifty years, is not a part of the country; it does not represent the Indian people whose affairs it administers. It is not constituted of representatives of the people. The British Government rules over India not for the sole purpose of administering the affairs of the Indian people but *with the object of exploiting them*. The present government of India is not elected by the people of India; it is appointed by the capitalist class of England, which makes profit by exploiting the labour of the Indian and English working class. We are rebelling against the present government *because it lets the British capitalist rob the Indian people*. A government which does not administer the affairs of the country in the welfare of the people of that country has no right to exist, and must therefore be overthrown. Foreign domination must be replaced by a national government. India must be governed by her own people, who will elect their own representatives to look after their interests and welfare.

The concern of the British Government is to see that the British merchants and manufacturers, who rule England today, get the greatest amount of profit by robbing the Indian people. The fact that the Viceroy is an Englishman and all the high government officials are also Englishmen does not mean that India is ruled by the English people as a whole. No, India is ruled by a very small section of the English nation—the small section which makes profit by exploiting the Indian people and natural resources of our country, and which is called *the capitalist ruling class*. It is the capitalist class which carried on trade, owns railways, mines, and plantations, and makes money by robbing the Indian worker and peasant of the fruits of his labour. It is this class which rules not only India, but England and the whole British Empire today. *The British Government is composed of the representatives of this powerful class of exploiters, who control the affairs of the Empire in their own interests.*

The same thing may happen when India will be governed by the Indians. The fact that an Indian gentleman may sit where Lord Reading sits today; that Indian officials [may] administer the affairs of the country instead of English ones; that all the governors of the provinces will be Indians; that all the magistrates, collectors and judges will also be Indians, does not necessarily mean that the country will be governed in the interests of the entire people of India.

Why is this so? *It is because the interests of all the people in any given country are not identical.* The Zemindars of Bengal, the Taluqdars of Oudh, the Patwaris of the Punjab, the mill-owners of Bombay and the Brahmins of Madras are all inhabitants of India; they are all a part of the Indian nation and belong to the same nationality. So also are the tenants of the Zemindars, Taluqdars and Patwaris in the various Indian provinces; the factory-hands of Bombay, the Pariahs of Madras—all are a part of the Indian people, belonging to the same nationality. But can we believe that simply because they belong to the same country, they have the same interests? No, of course not. It cannot be so. The Zemindars and Taluqdars cannot continue to occupy their present position of rich and idle parasites *unless there exists a class of people to cultivate the soil and pay them rents and tributes*. The mill-owners cannot exist *unless they have tens of thousands of workers to run their factories*. The Brahmins cannot maintain their superior religious and social position *unless a certain section of the population is held in intellectual darkness and social slavery*. All these people, the Zemindars, Taluqdars, merchants, manufacturers and parasitic priests, belong to the same class of exploiters whose interest it is to live at the expense of another and larger section of the population—the Indian workers and peasants.

It is clear then that the interests of all the people belonging to the same country are not identical. The interests of the rich are opposed to those of the poor; those of the landlord are not the same as those of his tenants; the interests of the mill-owner are contrary to those of his factory-hands. Why? *Because one class thrives on the exploitation of the other.*

The present government represents the British capitalist class, whose interest it is to exploit the labour of the Indian working-class, on whose wealth it fattens. When the British Government is overthrown, and a government of the Indian landlords, merchants and manufacturers is established in its place, will that change the present miserable condition of the Indian workers and peasants? No, for the interests of these two classes are not the same. A government composed of the upper and middle classes of the Indian people, in spite of being a national government, will protect only the interests of those classes, and not of the exploited majority. The power of the Zemindar will increase; more profits will swell the purse of the mill-owner; the Indian middle class intellectuals will fall heir to the fat government jobs today reserved for Civil Service men imported from Great Britain. How can this in any way alter the existing economic condition of the majority of the Indian people? In what way will this change of English rulers for Indians improve the lot of the toiling peasant and starving wage-slave?

Outlines of Swaraj

Thus it is necessary for us to enquire what kind of national government will be established in the country after the foreign domination is overthrown. We cannot remain satisfied with the vague formula of Swaraj as our goal. It is necessary to define Swaraj; to know what definite provisions will be made by the national government to improve the condition of the Indian masses.

The national government must represent the interests of the majority of the Indian people in order to protect the national interests. Who are the majority of the people of India? Who constitutes the backbone of the nation? Is it the idle landlords and rich capitalists or the industrious workers and peasants? *Ninety out of every hundred people in India belong either to the poor peasantry or the exploited city workers.* These are the people who produce everything necessary to the life and comfort of the nation; they till the soil, weave the cloth, build the houses, construct roads and railways, dig mines, run the trains and ships. It is they who conduce to the daily activity and progress of society, therefore *the welfare of her peasantry and working class constitutes the national welfare of India.*

This being the case, the national government of India will not be really representative unless it is controlled in the interests of and by the majority of the Indian people, the Indian workers and peasants. A government which represents the productive element of the society is the only truly national government which will foster and defend the interests of the majority. The capitalist employer and parasitic landlord cannot protect the interests of the productive classes, since the former thrives on the exploitation of the latter. Government power in the hands of the exploiting class will be wielded for the benefit of that class alone. The condition of the masses will be very little improved unless such improvement is guaranteed beforehand by a clear statement of national reconstruction put forward as a political programme to be fulfilled after the overthrow of foreign rule.

We demand the formation of such a programme of national reconstruction, which shall contain the following measures:

1. *That our National State* (Swaraj)*will be based on the principle of Universal Suffrage.*
2 *That the principal means of production, distribution and exchange (land, mines, factories, railways, waterways, etc.) will be owned by the Democratic State and operated under the control of Workers' Committees, elected by and from among the workers employed therein.*
3. *That Landlordism be abolished, and the ownership of land be vested in the State, which will distribute it among those who cultivate it.*

We demand these things in order that those who work shall enjoy the fruits of their labour, in order to bring the exploitation of man by man to an end.

The workers and peasants of India want to conquer Swaraj because it will open to them those avenues of progress now closed by the foreign ruler. The national government which replaces foreign rule must not administer the country in the sole interests of the Zemindars, factory-owners and other rich people. It must be the champion of the toiling masses, who have been exploited for so long by foreign imperialism. We will not overthrow one exploiter to put a new one in his place, simply because the latter happens to be born in the same country as ourselves, belongs to the same race and speaks the same tongue. It hurts just as much to be kicked by my own brother as by an Englishman in the street. . . .

The masses of our people are striving for something human; there is nothing spiritual or sublime in it. They produce everything, but live in misery and die of starvation. It is this state of affairs we are out to fight. Every human being requires something to live on. He has to struggle for his existence if he does not wish to die. The Indian people are no exception and if they are to live a human life, they must struggle to conquer that fight. This is the true nature of the struggle we are involved in— *to conquer the right to live as human beings*. This is the motive force of the movement for national liberation. . . .

It is this system of exploitation and expropriation which is responsible for the present miserable condition of the majority of the Indian people. True freedom of the human being cannot be realized so long as society is based upon the right of man to exploit his fellowmen. The British Government upholds this system; therefore we want to overthrow it. We are fighting, not for political independence and self-government alone, but for a Swaraj that will enable the Indian people to advance on the road to greater freedom in every field, social, economic and political. Foreign rule must be ended and national self-government put in its place. But the administration of independent India must not be allowed to fall completely into the hands of the native exploiting class. The government must be controlled by those who form the majority of the nation, and on whom the economic life of society depends, without whose labour no progress can be made. India should be liberated from foreign rule, not only to secure a greater scope for native capital and a more comfortable life for the upper classes, but in order to conquer a new life for the toiling masses as well. We are determined to free the Indian masses not from foreign exploitation alone but from all sorts of exploitation. The Indian people have begun a struggle which will not end with the attainment of political freedom alone.

PART II

Economic Emancipation

We will win political freedom as a step towards economic emancipation. Everybody, rich or poor, educated or ignorant, fights for his own interests. But the interests of every man are not the same. The interests of the rich cannot be the same as that of the poor; that of the employer cannot be identical with the interest of his workers, nor that of the Zemindar with his tenant. If the poor worker fights to improve his miserable condition, he comes immediately into conflict with the rich because the poverty of the one can be cured only by limiting the power of the other to rob and exploit him. The wages and living conditions of the city worker cannot be improved without reducing the profit of the employer; the lot of the agricultural classes can be lightened only at the expense of the landlord.

A nation struggles for its independence, but since every nation is divided into two classes, viz, the property-owning and the propertyless, the employer and the employee, the landowner and the cultivator, the capitalist and the worker—the object of this struggle for national independence cannot be the same for both these classes into which the people of every country are divided. The rich man wants Swaraj because under it he expects to grow richer. The factory-owner will build more factories and employ more workers to produce more goods and make more profit under the protection of the national government. The British Government does not let him build as many factories as he would like, because the English merchants and manufacturers want to sell to the Indian people the cloth, shoes, and other articles made in English factories. Therefore the Indian factory-owners want Swaraj. When India has a government controlled by the native propertied classes, the Indian capitalists will be helped instead of hindered in building more factories, employing more workers, producing more goods and making more profit.

The present government is foreign. The huge amount of money that it collects as revenue from land is sent to England. When the country will be free, this money will go to the Indian Zemindars. The profit that the English capitalist class makes by ruling India will be inherited by the Indian landlords, merchants and manufacturers when the foreign domination will be overthrown, when the English will no longer rule the country. But what will the common people get from this Swaraj? What will be their share in this freedom for which we are fighting, and to win which the blood of the Indian masses must be shed in torrents?

Theory of National Wealth Wrong

We are told that the industrial and commercial development of India will increase the national wealth, and that consequently, the economic conditions of all classes will be improved. But is it so? Let us examine some facts. Today India has to pay an enormous sum of money to buy the cloth imported from England. Thus it is argued that if the cloth we need is manufactured in this country, the money that today goes to England will stay in the country. Very good. But who pays this money? *The people who buy the cloth,* that is the common people, the workers and peasants, contribute a very large portion of this huge sum that goes out to England in payment for the cloth imported into India. Now when the cloth will be manufactured in the country, it surely will not be given free to the people who now buy it; they will have to buy it just as they always did. In other words, when the Indian masses buy country-made cloth instead of the imported commodity, their money will go into the pockets of the native merchant and manufacturer instead of to the British capitalist.

How will this fact make any appreciable difference in the economic condition of the common people? The same argument holds good for other industries. Some people say that the foreign cloth can be driven out of India by the revival of the Charkha and handloom. These people are visionaries. Their economics are wrong and they are socially reactionary. First of all, machine-made commodities cannot be ousted from the market by handmade stuff, which can always be undersold by the former, on account of lower cost of production and increased output. So those are mistaken who argue that the Charkha and handloom will drive away foreign cloth and the money thus saved will be evenly distributed among all the people. Then, supposing that handicraft production will be able to supply the demands of the country in sufficient quantities and at a low enough price so as to throw the machine-made imported commodities off the market, even this will not mean an equal distribution of the national wealth.

The Charkha and looms will be owned by private individuals; cotton will be produced by people interested in selling it at the highest possible price; the land on which cotton will be grown will carry rent. Thus all the elements of trade are latent in this primitive means of production, a return to which is held by many of our leaders to be the panacea for all the present troubles and miseries of the Indian people. And as long as all the economic elements giving impetus to trade are there, trade will develop and expand, changing the primitive individualistic character of industry into manufacture, machinefacture and large-scale production concentrated in the hands of a few who possess capital to purchase raw materials, machinery and hire labour just as it happened in Europe during the Industrial Revolution. The result will be the same in India as it was in Europe—*capitalist industry will expropriate the worker whose labour produces commodities, and the profits of production wrung from the unpaid labour of the worker will go to enrich the idle employer*. So under no conditions can the theory of an equal distribution of national wealth be put into practice.

The increase of national wealth means the enrichment of the native propertied class, and the enrichment of this class means the expropriation and pauperization of the producing class.

The industrial development of India under a national government will mean more extensive and intensive exploitation of the labour power of the working class. The building of more factories will require the employment of more labourers. Increased profit can be made only by paying lower wages. If the textile production of the country is increased, raw material must also become more plentiful and cheaper. This necessity will affect the economic position of the peasants who grow cotton. Methods of large-scale production will have to be introduced into agriculture to improve the quality and increase the quantity of the produce. This will mean the concentration of land in the hands of capitalist farmers, producing raw materials not for the use of the village weaver as in the olden days, but for exchange on the capitalist market. Concentration of land takes place only by ousting the poor peasantry, who are driven to the industrial centres to live the life of wage-slaves in the great factories.

Extensive industrialization of a country—the process by which national wealth is increased—means the liberation of the peasantry from feudal bondage, the expropriation of the free cultivator, the gradual elimination of individual production and the transformation of the pauperized peasants and artisans into proletarian wage-slaves.

This is exactly what is going to happen in India. National freedom will open up avenues for the aggrandizement of the propertied upper classes. But will that satisfy the requirements of the common people? Are we to call upon the peasants to join us in the struggle for Swaraj in order that they may be driven off their land or continue to live as now, completely at the mercy of the landlord, on the morrow of the establishment of Swaraj? Are we to call upon the masses to follow us in the fight against foreign rule, only to see them exploited by the native instead of the foreign capitalists? This is surely not what we want. This is not a revolutionary ideal. If this is our goal, if this is the Swaraj we are fighting for, then we can abandon the stormy path of non-co-operation and follow after the co-operating Moderates, who are also striving for the same thing and who lead us there in a much more orderly and peaceful manner. But we do not want to follow the Moderates. Why? Because there is a difference between their ideal and ours. *The Swaraj that we strive for then must be something more than a national government, under which the Indian propertied classes will thrive at the expense of the toiling masses.*

It becomes necessary, therefore, to define what are the interests of the common people. It is necessary to know clearly for what we are fighting. It is necessary to put before the Indian workers and peasants a programme of action. Above all, it is necessary for us to know that what we want is not the same thing that the rich and propertied classes of India want.

We are fighting for the economic interests of the Indian masses, which are distinct from those of the classes that thrive by robbing them....

In order that Swaraj may bring about such radical economic changes as will improve the life of the working class, it must be something more than a political makeshift or a spiritual formula. It must signify certain principles of economic reconstruction and social readjustment of the entire nation. The progressive upper classes of India are also oppressed by foreign rule in so far as free progress is not permitted to them. These classes have also a part to play in the general scheme of our social revolution. Their free development will break down all the old bondages of social conservatism and religious prejudice, bonds which can only be broken by the free development of economic forces by the rise of higher means of production. Therefore, *we must lead the masses of our people to support the progressive upper and middle classes in their struggle against imperialistic domination. But we must never for a moment confuse our goal with theirs.*

They want to go a certain distance and stop. As soon as they have conquered political power, as soon as they have become the rulers of the country in place of the overthrown foreigner, or as soon as the latter makes them sufficient concessions of power, they will stop all revolutionary agitation. It is our part to push them forward by strengthening their demands with the support of revolutionary masses. But this support must not be given unconditionally, since we must always remember that their goal and ours is not the same. We must support their demands on condition that certain demands of our own are included in their programme. *We must make them declare that Swaraj will guarantee the substantial economic improvement of the working class.*

Our demands should be so formulated as to secure as much as possible for the masses in return for their support of the nationalist cause. Our slogans should be such as will appeal to the imagination and desires of the exploited masses. We must put forward demands which can be easily understood by the most ignorant worker, and which will help him to see that such a Swaraj means something more for him than the Paradise of the Propertied classes or the Utopia of the Social reactionaries. Our programme must interpret Swaraj according to the needs and desires of the wide masses of the population, it must advocate concrete improvement in the economic condition of the working masses. We must define Swaraj to mean a state of national independence which will guarantee to the Indian workers and peasants a higher standard of living and the opportunity for further progress, free from the exploitation of capitalism. Such a Swaraj will open up a new vision of life to the Indian people, and such a Swaraj is alone worth fighting for.

Abolition Of Landlordism

We demand the expropriation of all big estates belonging to the Zemindars, Taluqdars, Jagirdars and other aristocrats and feudal lords. The land is to bear fruit for all who labour, but none of these idle rich men do anything to make the land yield harvests. It is the poor peasants who do all the work. Why then should these idle aristocrats own the land and make the cultivator pay them rent? There are lakhs of peasant families living on two or three *bighas* of land, whereas almost one-half of the whole country belongs to a small number of idle and corrupt landholders. Swaraj must put an end to this inequitable distribution of land—a distribution that is based on the principle of exploitation. The land should be given to those who cultivate it. The peasants must organize village councils to enforce the expropriation of large estates, and these village councils, composed of all the poor and landless peasants, should take charge of the redistribution of the land. The expropriated landlords, village traders, money-lenders and all others owning capital or large properties should be excluded from these village councils. The reason for such exclusion is plain. It is to protect the interests of the poor peasantry, freed from the age-long exploitation of landlordism, and to make the confiscation real. If legislative and executive power is not vested in the poor peasantry, they will be cheated by the cunning trader and money-lender, and a new class of land speculators will replace the old landlords.

The confiscation must be complete and unconditional. No compensation should be made, because in that case the confiscation will have no economic value. Who would pay this compensation? The Government? Where could the Government get the money? It would have to be raised by taxation. The expropriated landlords would hold heavy bonds and through these control the Government. This would mean the same state of affairs as now prevails. We are against compensation because it nullifies the act of confiscation. You talk about 'justice' to the landlords. Where is your sense of 'justice' now towards the expropriated peasants? There can be no talk of justice in what is an economic question, pure and simple. If we want the welfare of the peasant masses, the rights of landlordism must be unconditionally challenged and abrogated. A Swaraj which does not put the welfare of the exploited masses above that of the privileged upper classes cannot be of any interest or concern to a revolutionary who strives for the political freedom of India, not for the sake of political freedom in itself, but as a necessary step towards the happiness of the majority of the Indian people, now sunk in an abyss of misery.

Our Agrarian Programme is *Unconditional Abolition of Landlordism, the national ownership of land and its distribution among the poor peasantry. Our slogan is confiscation without compensation.*

Our Agrarian Programme can only be executed by the expropriated peasantry itself. Thus we must popularize our programme in the villages and organize the poor peasantry into militant class organizations which will carry on a continuous struggle against *the landlords, the usurers and speculating traders.*

Futility of Village Reform

The attempts of some of our nationalists to revive the old Panchayats are reactionary. These attempts are not inspired by any revolutionary ideal, but by the desire to blunt the edge of the class-conflict, which is growing sharper every day. Neither will the reformist activities of the social workers do. To try to teach the pauperized peasantry self-help before they learn self-assertion is useless. It is like advising a man to cook his food tastefully to make up for deficiency in quantity. *The village cannot be reformed, because its economic basis is rotten.* Excessive and multifarious exploitation is the cause of the chronic poverty of the peasantry which requires a radical remedy. No patchwork will do. How can you save the peasant from pestilence by sinking a well or starting a charitable dispensary, when he falls so easily victim to any epidemic disease because of his undermined vitality, which in turn is produced by life-long malnutrition? How can you teach the peasant co-operation when the villages are infested with money-lenders and traders, with their thousand and one cunning schemes of exploitation, which they carry on with the support of the local officials? In addition, so long as the peasantry will be submerged in debt as they are today, they will not be in a position to dispose of their products in a fair market.

Excessive rents and taxes, imposed alike by the Government and the landlord, force him into the clutches of the usurer and land-speculator; the only release is found in the slums of the large industrial cities. Burdened with heavy debts, which always increase, the majority of the peasants are forced to mortgage their own crops even before they are sown. How can you save them from this situation so long as the law sanctions even the worst forms of exploitation? While his crops are liable to be auctioned off by the court bailiff, or seized by the creditor before they are harvested, it is idle to preach to the peasant the magic charm of co-operative stores. Such movements will be encouraged by the landlords as well as by the Government because they are instrumental in pacifying the discontent of the peasantry. It is necessary to go deep into the root cause if we are sincerely fighting for the welfare of the peasantry, which constitute more than eighty per cent of our nation. The peasants are poor because a large part of what they produce is taken away from them in the form of rent, taxes, interests and contributions. Their poverty cannot be cured unless the system which sanctions and protects all these innumerable forms of robbery is changed. Reformist activities only help to perpetuate the system by teaching the peasant to make the best of the situation and to accept it as inevitable. *Thus reformism, besides being futile, is reactionary and counter-revolutionary.*

Militant Village Councils

We are against the revival of the old Panchayats because they do not suit the present requirements. In former days, they were a politico-economic institution corresponding to a certain stage of economic development of the people. The Panchayat is a form of organization suitable to a community just emerging from a state of tribal communism. But this cannot be said of the Indian village today, where private ownership prevails. When the village land was still held in common, the Panchayat functioned as the government of the community. The evolution of private property long ago destroyed the economic significance of this institution, and with the disappearance of its economic significance its political importance becomes nil. Today the Panchayat can have no juridical, legislative or administrative authority, because all these functions are vested in a government whose foundations do not rest on the Panchayat. The line that divides our present society into two great classes—viz., exploiter and exploited—runs also through every village community. *The Panchayat cannot eliminate this division, which is based upon private ownership.* If the Panchayat be elected by all the adult population of the village, it becomes nothing more nor less than a little Parliament, with all the limitations and abuses of parliamentary democracy latent within its organism. It is proven by experience in countries where this form of government prevails, that parliamentary democracies do not by their very nature protect the interests of the working class, which is only able to wrest some rights for itself by the use of militant class-action. Therefore, the Panchayat will not solve the agrarian problem of the villages. It may possibly act as an arbitration court, but such courts have no possibility of changing the economic status of the peasantry.

The village councils which we propose to organize will be *militant class-organizations* which will represent, not the interests of the whole village population but those of the poor peasantry. Just as the nation is not a homogeneous whole with identical interests among all classes, so neither is the village community. A governing body composed of the landlord or his representative, the rich peasant-proprietor, the money-lender, trader, artisan, poor peasant and landless proletariat will surely not protect the interests of the last three named. Therefore, our organization will include only those expropriated elements that are constantly engaged in a struggle with the exploiting upper classes and their partisans. A programme which expresses their immediate interests will be easily understood by the ignorant rural masses, and through this programme their struggle will be guided towards the wider channels of national liberation and complete social and economic emancipation. It is in the process of struggle itself that their revolutionary consciousness will be aroused. The fight against the money-lenders will bring them up against the government, personified in the law courts that protect the rights of the usurer to exact interest. The conflict with the landlords will draw the government into the field to protect the rights of the latter. Thus the necessity of overthrowing the foreign domination that upholds the present system which oppresses him will become forced upon the understanding of the peasantry.

It is thus we should organize the peasantry. Not by giving them 'constructive programmes', not to teach them 'self-help', not to tell them to spin after the hard day's labour in order to earn a few pice more, not to set up dummy arbitration courts without any authority to enforce their own decisions—*but to demand the reduction of rents and taxes, to back up such demands by refusing payment and resisting arbitrary collections, to organize mass demonstrations to protest against the imposition of indirect taxation such as the salt tax, against high prices, low wages and the payment of usury*. We must learn to direct the organized energy of the rural masses towards the redress of those innumerable immediate grievances which make their lives a burden.

Mass action thus begun will develop into organized agrarian strikes, into food riots, the plunder of corn-stocks and assaults upon large estates with the idea of confiscation. The downtrodden peasantry must be made conscious of their right to live like human beings and our propaganda should be aimed at making them understand that they should conquer this right by militant action. Such action, properly organized on a large scale, will arouse them from their age-long mental and spiritual slavery, and make them conscious of their own might. Reactionary pacifism must be repudiated. What burst out spontaneously at Gorakhpur, Rae Bareilly, Chauri Chaura, Malabar, Central India, and what is going on in the Punjab must be developed by every possible means. Peasant revolts should spread like wild-fire from one end of the country to the other. We must formulate our programe to correspond to the economic interests of the masses, then go forward boldly with that programme till we reach our goal.

The Government of the people—a government which represents the interests of the majority—should not allow the backbone of our country, the peasantry,to be ground down in abject poverty. We want to see the life of the peasant improved. Why should those who produce food for the entire country remain eternally in the miserable condition they live in today? Science has shown how abundant harvests can be yielded from the land with little labour if modern methods are introduced into agriculture. A hundred years ago, people had to walk from one end of the country to the other. Merchandise was carried from province to province by horses, mules or camels. Today it is otherwise. Railway trains take people from Calcutta to Lahore in three days. Lakhs of maunds of merchandise are carried hundreds of miles without effort in a few hours. How much trouble has been saved! The work that formerly needed the labour of hundreds of men is done by one steam engine.

The same can be done in agriculture. With the aid of modern implements the peasant can cultivate his soil with much less labour. A plough driven by steam can take the place of at least a hundred of those we use now. Thus a steam-plough will free the peasant from an enormous amount of labour. On the other hand, it tills the land much better and faster, and makes it yield more crops. Instead of toiling from sunrise to sunset, the peasant need work but a few hours a day to secure a larger harvest. The rest of the time he can spend in play, amusement, rest and study, in developing the higher side of his nature which today he has no time for. Those pleasant aspects of life, enjoyed at present only by the idle rich, will then be within the reach of all. Life will become an enjoyment and a blessing instead of a burden and a drudgery.

Thus we want the method of agriculture to be improved under Swaraj. But one may ask, 'a steam plough, even a modern steel plough, costs so much that the ordinary peasant cannot buy it'. Well, we are fighting for Swaraj, for our own government which will administer the country not in the interests of the foreign merchants and manufacturers, but for the benefit of the Indian people. The present government does not help the peasant to improve his condition, it extracts rent and taxes and leaves him to starve. This must not be the case under Swaraj. Our own government must care for the welfare of the people. Now the peasant cannot buy modern implements because he is poor. It is not his fault that he is poor; he is made so by the exploitation of the foreign government and native Zemindar. We must set up such a government which will help the poor peasants buy modern agricultural machinery and improve their primitive agriculture. We will set up village councils. Not the old Panchayat over which the village bully ruled. Our councils will be elected by the poor peasants from among themselves and will administer the affairs of the village. The national government will buy modern agricultural implements and place them at the disposal of these village communities, which in their turn will rent these out to the peasants at a very moderate charge. As the village councils will be controlled by the peasants themselves, the rent will naturally be fixed according to their own capacity to pay. Thus the poverty of the peasant will no longer prevent him from obtaining the help of modern science and invention to free himself from his present misery.

Small plots of land cultivated independently by individual owners are not suitable for the use of modern agricultural machinery, which can be used to advantage only on large tracts of land. It is also true that the productivity of the soil cannot be very much increased under the primitive system of agriculture that prevails among our peasantry. Individual cultivation should be replaced by large-scale farming in order to raise the productivity of the soil and utilize modern farm implements. Only thus can the maximum production be secured by the minimum labour. Large-scale farms, however, become vehicles of intensive exploitation if owned by private capitalists for their own profit. In order that the mass of the peasants should derive advantage from them, *these large-scale farms should be owned by the state and everybody who works on them should share equally in the produce.*

Individualism is the main trait of the peasant's character. Under the evolution of the system of private ownership, the old primitive tribal communism breaks down and the sense of private ownership of property becomes very strong in the peasant. Today, oppressed by the government and landlord, by the usurer and trader, this land-hunger is intensified. He hugs to his bosom the small plot of land which he possesses or imagines he possesses, and which is all that stands between him and starvation. His first instinct is to own the land which he tills. This psychology is bred by the economic law of his environment, and cannot be killed in a day. To work against it would be disastrous. We must therefore slowly proceed and by steps to train him to the idea of large-scale farming on the basis of social or community ownership. *The first act of the revolution must be to put him in possession of the land which he cultivates, whose final ownership should be declared vested in the state.*

In order to show the peasant the advantages of community ownership, communal agricultural farms should be started to serve as models under the direct supervision of government experts. Great estates now under a modern system of agriculture and tracts of waste-land can be utilized for such communal farms, which will be controlled by the council of peasants who work on them.

Nationalization of Public Utilities

Besides land, there are other institutions and properties used by everybody and which are indispensable to the life and progress of the nation. Such are the railways, canals, telegraphs, mines etc., which are known as public utilities. These public utilities should cease to be owned by private individuals for their own profit, but should be owned by the whole society. They have not been specially created by anyone. The workers have brought them into existence by dint of hard labour. Gold, copper, iron, coal and other minerals are dug out of the earth by the toil of the miners, who work like beasts of burden, while the rich owners make profit by selling the minerals. The worker who digs the coal out of the bowels of the earth has to pay for it if he wants a bucketful to cook his own food. This is nothing but robbery, and we are not going to let it continue under Swaraj. The railways, telegraphs, mines and canals should belong to the nation. No private individual should be allowed to make profit out of these public utilities. At present many railways, the canals and telegraphs do not belong to private persons, but neither do they belong to the nation. They are the property of the British Government which is controlled by the rich English bankers, merchants and manufacturers. This is no national ownership. If Swaraj means simply the transfer of the administration of the country to the native capitalist class, the workers will not be benefited very much. In that case the railways, telegraphs, canals and mines will be given over to private owners who will operate them for their own profit. Our capitalist class has already registered its opinion against the state ownership of public utilities. They want to inherit the position occupied today by imperialist capital. Such a change of hands will swell the profits of those who are already rich, but what benefit will the workers get out of it?

We are against private ownership of public utilities. We demand their nationalization under Swaraj.

Handicrafts Versus the Machine

We are told that it is a shame to put on foreign cloth, to use any article made in another country. Our leaders say that we must weave all the cloth we wear here in India; we must manufacture ourselves everything the nation needs. Very well. We also agree that all foreign goods should be thrown out of the country. What follows this resolution? Big industries must be built in India to produce the goods formerly imported from outside. Hardly one-half the cloth needed by the people is manufactured inside the country; it is produced in the large factories as well as by the weavers in the village. Boycott of foreign cloth cannot be successful unless twice as much cloth is manufactured in the country. How can this be done? Our leaders find the solution in the Charkha. With this solution we cannot agree. First of all, as seen previously, we cannot compete successfully against machine-made products by primitive handicrafts. Then the progress of science has made the life of man more comfortable than in the ancient days. Modern machinery saves human labour. Why should a hundred people bend their backs before the loom when the same work can be done by one person with the help of a machine, which is also the creation of man? When men knew of no other way, they made the women spin with the primitive Charkha. Now the work of several hundred Charkhas can be done in the course of one hour by the use of machinery. Why should we condemn our womanhood to the ancient drudgery, which is no longer necessary?

Cloth produced in the factories by the use of machines is cheaper than that made on the handlooms. Machine-made articles are always cheaper than hand-made ones because of large scale production, which increases the output and lowers the cost of each article. Machine-made cloth is also more comfortable to wear than Khaddar, and why should we not be comfortable? We are human beings after all. If Swaraj wants to take us back to barbarism, we don't want it. Why should we suffer, sacrifice and die for something which will not improve our material condition? We are fighting not for mere abstract freedom alone, but for material prosperity. We want Swaraj because foreign domination has sucked the blood of our nation. It has obstructed the national progress. We are fighting for a Swaraj which will carry us forward with the rest of mankind. We have been kept back too long already; why should we go further backward into primitive savagery?

The Charkha will not help us. It is a step backward, not forward.

Why should our women spin all day when a good piece of machine-made cloth can be bought more cheaply in the market? We don't want sixty crores of rupees to be taken from our country by the British merchants who sell us their cloth, but if we have to pay more for a piece of cloth made in India how can we buy country-made goods?

More factories must be built in the country so that everything the people need can be supplied by articles manufactured in India. This is the only way by which foreign goods can be thrown off our home market. But if thousands of factories are built in the country, who is going to prosper thereby? *Those people who own them*. This prosperity will not be for the workers who form the majority of the nation. If the mill-owners of Bombay grow richer, does that make our hunger less biting? Therefore we declare that ample provision should be made so that the Indian workers can share in the national prosperity that will come with political and economic independence.

This prosperity will be created by the workers. Factories will be built and operated by them, just as the existing ones are built and operated. The labour of the workers has enabled the factory-owners to make profits. But have the workers gained anything except a bare existence? No, nothing. The fact that the factory was owned by a foreigner or an Indian has made no difference to the Indian working class. The capitalist proprietor is interested in making profits. He pays the workers the smallest possible wages, just sufficient to keep them alive and working. In the last four years, the profits from the cotton mills of Bombay and Ahmedabad have increased six to seven times, while the wages have hardly doubled.

We want all this to be changed. Swaraj must help India to build more industries, to build more factories, to employ more workers. But we are not fighting for a Swaraj that will increase the means of exploiting the working class. The latter must derive some benefit if they are asked it fight for it. And it must not be forgotten *that there can be no Swaraj unless the Indian workers and peasants join in the struggle for it*. If Swaraj is to be won through the combined strength of the workers and peasants, they must be convinced that they are fighting for something which will benefit them, whose fruits they will reap and enjoy.

A Minimum Wage and an Eight-hour Day for Labour

We demand that every worker shall receive a minimum wage which will secure for him and for his family a decent standard of living, which will guarantee him an improvement in his present miserable condition. Out of the profits derived from the factories, houses should be built for the workers. If the National Congress desires to lead the masses in the struggle for liberation, it must endorse these demands of the working class.

The workers are human beings and are entitled to lead a human life. Why should they spend their whole time in working for the profit of the employer? They need time to enjoy themselves, to educate themselves, to develop the finer aspects of life, and to rest. This they can never do so long as they must spend ten, eleven, twelve and fourteen hours a day in mines, factories and workshops, earning a miserable pittance insufficient for themselves and their families to exist upon. We want the industrialization of the country because with the help of modern machinery, all requirements of society can be secured by the minimum amount of human labour and in the shortest possible time. But this will not mean the betterment of the condition of the working class, *so long as the means of production remain the property of private individuals, whose object is not to produce commodities for the use and benefit of the community but to produce them for exchange in order to make profit*. This is demonstrated by the condition of the working class in highly industrialized countries like England, Germany and France and the United States. Industrialization is a curse so long as it is conducted on the basis of capitalist production for profit, of private ownership.

Eight hours a day for five and a half days a week should be the maximum amount of compulsory labour performed by anybody. In that space of time, a factory worker produces much more value than the amount he receives in wages for a ten or eleven hours day. Why are the Indian workers forced to work such long hours? Because the employers, both native and foreign, make more profit by exploiting him (them) thus. Eight hours labour in a modern factory produces more than sufficient value to pay for three full meals a day, clean clothes and a decent place to live in, besides leaving a good margin for profit. In few Western countries, where there is an eight-hour law, do the workers work longer; yet their wages are higher and standard of living far superior to that of the Indian workers. This is not due to the fact that Western capitalists are any more charitable than our own, but *to the organized strength of the working class, which has been able to enforce a minimum wage and eight-hour day by means of direct action*. If the masses contribute their forces towards the winning of Swaraj, their demand for a fair standard of living must not be ignored. The national freedom that leaves the majority of the people in their present condition of wage-slavery will not mean anything to them and will prove a hollow mockery....

Our programme must be put into action at once. We must demonstrate by deeds that it is not the aggrandizement of the upper classes but the emancipation of the masses under Swaraj that we strive for.

To rally the working class under the banner of Swaraj, we must make this economic struggle a part of the political struggle. The redress of the immediate grievances of the Indian workers and peasants should be our object. In case of conflict between the interests of the native capitalist and the worker, we must boldly take the side of the latter if we are sincerely fighting for the welfare of the majority of the Indian people. Such demands of the workers as the right of organization, the right of strike, the recognition of the unions, the eight-hour day, minimum wage, proper housing facilities etc., should be included in the Action Programme of the Indian National Congress, or failing this, a Party of the Masses would be organized setting forth the demands of the Indian workers and peasants. Every local strike should be developed into a general strike with combined political and economic demands at every available opportunity. Labour unions should be organized, not to reconcile the interests of the employers and the employees *but to act as militant organs of the working class struggle*.

Workers' Control of Industry

In the industrial field we must go farther if our goal is the complete economic emancipation of the masses. Industrial development will release the working class from the drudgery of primitive production. Machinery enables man to procure his necessities with the least amount of labour. This process of saving human labour and releasing human effort for higher pursuits will continue with the development and application of science. Every blessing conquered by the genius and efforts of men should be brought within the reach of our people. *But this cannot be done unless the present social system, the system of private property, is radically changed*. We advocate this change. Considering the industrial backwardness of our country, it may be necessary to advance gradually towards this goal. But in order to counteract the abuses and miseries of capitalist industrialism, we propose *state supervision and workers' control of industry*.

All heavy industries should be placed under the supervision of the National State based upon universal suffrage. But experience in the Western countries has shown that political democracy alone does not restrict the exploitation of the working class by capitalism. On the contrary, it protects the most flagrant and intensive forms. Therefore we demand that *Swaraj shall be based not only upon political, but upon industrial democracy as well*. Those who control the means of production monopolize the political state power. If the industries of the country are left entirely as the property of and under the control of the individual capitalist, political freedom even under a democratic government will be only a myth. The protection and welfare of the working class therefore demands a certain degree of supervision and restraint over capitalist ownership of industries. This supervision and restraint will be exercised by the *workers' councils,* elected from among and by the workers in the factory. These councils will see that the laws regarding the protection of the workers are enforced and that the profit accruing to the owner does not exceed a certain limit set by the democratic government.

In this way the national wealth, increased by the development of industries, will be as evenly distributed as is possible within the limits of capitalist ownership. Excessive exploitation of the workers will be prohibited and the industries of the country will be run no longer in the exclusive interests of a few individuals who contribute nothing themselves to the actual process of production, but whose pockets are swelled by the unpaid labour of the workers. State Supervision and Workers' Control of Industry will enable the people in general to benefit at least in part by the process of modern machine-production, and will hold somewhat in check, the abuses of capitalistic exploitation.

Our ultimate object, however, is a complete *social revolution,* which means the *abolition of private ownership in the means of production, distribution and exchange.* Only thus will the real freedom of the Indian people be achieved. The realization of our goal depends upon the development of the working class.

The political independence of the nation must be followed by the economic emancipation of the masses, because without economic freedom the labouring classes, which constitute the overwhelming majority of every community, cannot attain an all-round elevation on every plane, physical, intellectual and spiritual.

PART III

Social Emancipation

The real and lasting freedom of a people demands their complete and unconditional social emancipation. From time immemorial, the working class has lived in a state of social slavery. Why is this so? Why is the class which produces everything condemned to slavery? Is it because it is by nature inferior to the other classes? Is there any reason to believe that those who maintain society by their toil are in any way inferior to those who live in idle luxury? No, we cannot belive that some have been specially ordained to live in comfort and happiness, while the great majority exist in want and misery. Two hundred workers build a house. In this house, a few people live comfortably. Who decides that these few, and not the many whose labour has built the house, shall live in it? *The law of private property decides.* The people who have paid for the house are said to own it, though they have done nothing to bring it into existence. They have not laid one brick; they have not moved a piece of stone; they have not carried one pitcher of water. Yet we are told: 'The owners have paid the workers wages for their labour'. Where did the owners get this money with which they paid wages to the workers? They did not coin it, neither did it drop from heaven. This money with which the workers are paid their wages does not belong to the owners, because it has been gained by exploitation, by robbing other workers of the fruits of their labour. The money has been gained from profits made on land or industry or trade, and all profits, as we have seen, are made from the unpaid labour of the working class. Thus the wealth of the rich does not rightfully belong to them, but to those who have worked to produce it.

Just so long as everything that is produced by the labour of the many remains the property of the few, just so long will the working class continue to be the slave of the capitalist class, of those who own private property. Until this system based upon private ownership, which leads to the exploitation of human labour, is changed there cannot be real freedom. Since everything of value is created by human labour, these should belong to all those who work. And in order to earn the right to live in human society, *productive labour should be made compulsory to all.*

Some argue thus: 'Well, the people of the upper classes are more educated and more intelligent than the workers, that is why they are able to earn more money'. This is a foolish argument. If the children of the workers and peasants were sent to the same schools and colleges as the children of the rich, would they be any less educated than the latter? Of course not. It is not lack of *ability*, but lack of *opportunity*, that creates a difference in education and culture. It is not natural inferiority but *economic disability* that creates such a wide gulf between the rich privileged classes and the poor and downtrodden masses. The wages they receive are not sufficient to feed their children; how then can they send them to school, especially in a country where education is neither free nor compulsory? No, it is not natural inferiority; they are maintained in poverty so that the few may live in luxury.

Against this system, we must rebel. We declare war on it, and we demand its overthrow. This is what we want. National freedom, a small increase in wages, some slight improvements in our miserable way of living will not, after all, change our life very much for the better. The cost of living will keep step with the increase in wages. As long as capitalism exists, so long as society is based upon private ownership, the working class will continue to be exploited by the possessing class. *We demand the liberation of the industrious classes. We are struggling for that state of society in which everyone shall work, and each will enjoy the full fruits of his labour.* We fight for national independence because we know that it is the first step forward towards our ultimate goal. What we really strive for, what we really want, is for the Indian nation to become a free community of those who labour productively for the good of society. In such a community, the idle rich can have no place. It is the task of the workers to establish such a society.

We propose to educate, organize and lead the working class in this struggle for Social Emancipation, which will be hard and prolonged. The goal cannot be reached at once, we must progress by stages. In order to free the toiling masses from social slavery, we have to fight every inch of the way. The privileged class is seated very firmly in the saddle. It cannot be overthrown at once. When the foreign ruler is driven out, our native master class will take its place. Age-long economic enslavement has obstructed our moral and intellectual progress. For this reason, in spite of the unbearable misery in which the majority of us live, many are still resigned to their lot. They believe fate has ordained them to be poor and to suffer. This ignorance and passivity of the masses has always been fomented by the upper classes and maintained by every means within their power, chief among which has been the preaching of religions that teach resignation to our earthly lot as to the will of God.

The first thing we have to fight and overcome is this spirit of resignation and submission engendered by superstition and ignorance.

This task is aided by objective economic forces, which have shaken the traditional passivity of the Indian masses and have set them on the war path. It is our task to direct this awakening in the channels that will lead to real freedom.

We must educate the ignorant workers. We must show them how they are robbed and exploited. Many do not know what slaves they are; they think it a virtue to be poor. We must teach them that those who preach the virtues of poverty are not true spiritual guides, but the protectors of the interests of the master class. The masses must be freed from their moral slavery in order to realize fully the misery of their material life. Throughout the ages they have been taught that they will be rewarded in the afterlife if they suffer patiently in this. This is all very well to say, but we know that the hope of future bliss does not lessen the sufferings of our everyday life, which is the only actuality we know of. No, we must fight to win freedom in this life, to improve our present economic condition in order to release other and higher faculties, born of leisure and enjoyment. We must teach the masses that the philosophy of poverty is conducive to the interests of the idle rich, because it keeps the people docile and harmless. This spirit of docility and resignation does not make for freedom; so long as the Indian people remain victims of this pernicious doctrine, even the political liberation of our country cannot be realized.

Therefore we want to organize the workers in their own class organizations with the object of fighting for the interests of their class. If they do not wish to be deceived and betrayed, let them not trust to the leadership of the upper classes, whose interests are fundamentally opposed to their own. The exploited masses can be educated and organized effectively only in the school of revolutionary mass action.

Revolutionary Mass Action

The working class must be organized first of all to defend its own interests. We have seen how the interests of the entire people in any country cannot be the same, because they are divided into two antagonistic classes, namely, the propertied and the property-less, the owner and the producer, the employer and the employee, the capitalist and the worker. The former thrives on the exploitation of the latter, therefore the interest of the one cannot be the interest of the other. Both may unite temporarily to fight together against a common enemy, but this union can never be permanent, because each is struggling for a different goal—neither is actuated by the same motives; *each wants liberty, but the liberty of their respective class.*

The Indian people as a whole are exploited by the foreign ruler, and therefore the British Government is their common enemy irrespective of class distinction. Rich and poor, capitalist and worker, bourgeoisie and proletariat, are fighting and must continue to fight in a united front against the foreign domination. This fight is called the struggle for national freedom. The Indian people are fighting for their political independence, for the right to rule themselves. The Indian propertied class want to be free of foreign rule because under it, freedom of development and the unrestricted right of exploitation is denied to this class. If all the wealth produced by the workers and peasants of India remained in the hands of the rich native capitalists, the British would cease to rule India, because there would be no profit in their rule. As long as a foreign government rules the country, the native capitalist class must lose a portion of the proceeds of exploitation, which are appropriated by the foreign ruler and which the native class consider their legitimate due. Such being the case, the native upper classes must fight the foreign exploiter. They say they are struggling against foreign domination to make the country free, but what they are really fighting for is their own interest. They are fighting for the freedom to exploit the Indian workers and peasants and the natural resources of the country; in order to secure this they must become the rulers of India. This is the national freedom they are striving for; this is what they want.

But is this what we want? Will the condition of the toiling masses, who constitute the great majority of the Indian people, be any better off after gaining such national freedom? No, surely not. The Indian workers and peasants are poor, they are starving, they die by thousands from famine and pestilence, because the exploitation of the propertied class deprives them of the fruit of their labour. The British, being the rulers of the nation, are able to rob the people more than the native capitalists do. Therefore we must fight to overthrow them. But the overthrow of British rule will not be enough to free the entire people from economic exploitation and social slavery. *The fundamental motive of our struggle is to abolish the source of human exploitation, which lies in the system of private property, of production for profit, in a word, Capitalism.* Since the entire Indian people are exploited by a foreign power, the entire people must rebel against it, must unite their forces to fight against and overthrow it. But this does not alter the fact that the people are divided into two antagonistic classes, with mutually opposing interests.

The Indian workers and peasants will join the struggle against foreign rule, impelled by the interests of their class, because it exploits them, keeps them economically backward and obstructs their social progress. Our fight is of a different nature from that of the rich Zemindars, capitalists and intellectuals. We are fighting for the interests of the common people and our goal must be always clear before us. We want to end foreign exploitation of the Indian masses in order to better their economic condition. This is our immediate goal. Our ultimate goal is the end of all exploitation. We want to break the age-long social slavery of all those who live by labour, who create all wealth.

How to achieve this ultimate goal? How to proceed? A hard struggle lies before us. Our fight will be a long one. Intelligent leadership is necessary, but we must ultimately learn to depend on the irresistible strength of mass action, impelled ever forward by relentless economic forces, which in the end always triumph. *Our task is to develop in the minds of the masses this consciousness of their own power, to awaken their interest and develop their indomitable will to conquer freedom*. They will do the rest.

By agitation, we can educate the workers to understand the interests of their class. We can teach them how to organize themselves for concerted action on the economic and political field. We can help to root out of them that spirit of resignation, of submission to fate, which robs them of all initiative and desire to improve their material existence by active struggle. We must teach them their right to live as human beings, and help them to formulate the demands which must be backed by determined mass action, which under perfect organization and leadership can be developed into a country-wide general strike.

Our task will be aided by external forces, ever at work. Starvation and age-long suffering have already shaken the traditional resignation of the Indian working class. They are in a rebellious mood, ready to fight. They demand a change in their condition but because of their centuries of moral and material slavery, the majority of them do not know exactly what to fight for. It is our task to infuse consciousness in these toiling masses—to develop the spontaneous awakening and intensify their rebellious spirit of leading their struggle for the redress of their immediate grievances. *Our object should be to create discontent everywhere against the present system of exploitation, and to intensify it wherever it exists*. Thus will the ideal of Swaraj be brought within the understanding of the workers and peasants of India. Let us lead them forward under the slogans: *'Down with Foreign Rule'; 'Down with all Exploitation'; 'Land to the Peasant and Bread to the Worker'*.

India's Problem and Its Solution

by

MANABENDRA NATH ROY*

Editor's Introductory Note

The original edition of *India's Problem and its Solution*, a photocopy of which has been kindly supplied by Ethel B. Lobman from the Tamiment Collection in the Elmer Bobst Library, New York University, New York, consisted of fifty-five pages, was priced four annas per copy, but carried no date of publication. In his 'Revised Checklist', Patrick Wilson proposed 1923 with a question mark, but contemporary evidence definitely shows that the book was brought out in October 1922. According to the Report of the Director of Criminal Intelligence copies of the book were intercepted in India in November, 1922; besides, it was translated into Urdu and published by Roy's contact, Ghulam Hussain, in *Inqilab* in November-December (Cecil Kaye, *Communism in India*, 1971 imprint, p. 27 and p. 51).

In fact, *India's Problem* was a compilation of 13 articles which had originally appeared in *The Vanguard of Indian Independence* from June to September 1922 and in *The Advance-Guard* in October. Roy altered the titles of many of the articles which became sections of the book; he also changed the sequence in some cases. We give below the table of contents of *India's Problem* together with the original title and date of publication of each section:

Section heading in the book	Original title in the periodical	Name of periodical and date
Introduction	Our Object	*The Vanguard* Vol. 1 No. 1, 15 May 1922
*Confusion in the Congress	The Political Situation	" 1, 7, 15 Aug 1922
Beware of Pitfalls	Danger Ahead	" 1, 3, 15 June 1922
New Programme	Constructive Programme	" 1, 2, 1 June 1922
*At the Cross-roads	Which Way	" 1, 3, 15 June 1922

What to do?	Our Immediate Task	No. 1, 4, 1 July 1922
*The New Opposition	Crisis in the Congress	" 1, 2, 1 June 1922
*Wrecking the Councils	Participation in the Councils"	" 1, 5, 15 July 1922
*Civil Disobedience	Civil Disobedience	" 1, 8, 1 September 1922
Labour and the National Movement	Labour Organization	" 1, 7, 15 August 1922
Shallow Extremism	The Collapse of Extremism	" 1, 9, 15 September 1922
New Leadership	Wanted a New Party	*The Advance-Guard* Vol. 1, No. 1, 1 October 1922
Mass Action	Mass Action	"1, 2, 15 October 1922

Out of the thirteen articles eight have already been included in the selections from *The Vanguard* and *The Advance-Guard* in this Volume. We reproduce here the remaining five which are indicated by asterisk marks in the above list of contents. S. N. R.

Confusion in the Congress*

The arrest of Gandhi at last let loose the various conflicting economic interests and social tendencies that were knit in a superficial unity in the National Congress under his personal influence. A great confusion and the inevitable disintegration are the two most outstanding features of the Indian movement today. It has arrived at the close of one period, but has not as yet found its way into the next. In order best to understand the present situation it is necessary to make a short review of the past months which directly led up to it.

The magnificent demonstrations and mass strikes during the visit of the Prince of Wales brought into relief two facts, viz., the growing rebellious spirit of the masses, and the unwillingness of the Nationalist leaders, above all Gandhi, to develop or even countenance this spirit which spelt revolution. The Ahmedabad Congress met in an extremely revolutionary period, but it was not governmental repression, which had already been started with the arrest of the President-elect C.R. Das, Lajpat Rai, Ali Brothers and other influencial leaders, but the timidity of the leadership which turned it into a tame, impotent show. It was an instance of rank betrayal of the revolutionary forces by the bourgeois leadership. While throughout the length and breadth of the country, mass demonstrations were challenging the State's authority to preserve law and order, the Congress harped on the tune of non-violence, and denounced the revolutionary action of the masses as 'rowdyism' and 'forces of evil'. Instead of adopting a fighting program, embracing the redress of the immediate grievances of the workers and peasants, thus to involve them more consciously and actively in the struggle, the Congress adopted the so-called 'Constructive Program' which was nothing less than a repudiation of all revolutionary preparations. This 'Constructive Program' was prefaced by summary abandonment of the tactics of non-cooperation as well as of the powerful slogan of civil disobedience given out but a few weeks before the Congress met at Ahmedabad, which slogan was very enthusiastically responded to by the poor peasantry, because it corresponded to their economic needs. The Congress through the mouth of its elected dictator, Gandhi, declared that civil disobedience could not be declared until there was a 'perfect atmosphere of non-violence in the country'. This decision of Ahmedabad was corroborated by the Working Committee of the Congress in its session held at Bardoli.[1] The Bardoli Resolution, which suspended all revolutionary activities, included the following clauses which left no doubt whatsoever as to the social affiliation of the Congress leadership. It was resolved at Bardoli:—

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* Originally published in *The Vanguard of Indian Independence*, Vol. I, No. 7, 15 August 1922, under the title 'The Political situation: Confusion in the National Congress' signed by M. N. Roy. S.N.R.

Clause 1. The Working Committee deplores the inhuman conduct of the mob at Chauri Chaura in having brutally murdered constables and wantonly burned police thana (station).

Clause 2. In view of the violent outbreaks every time mass civil disobedience is inaugurated, indicating that the country is not non-violent enough, the working Committee of the Congress resolves that mass civil disobedience . . . be suspended, and instructs the local Congress Committees to advise the cultivators to pay land revenue and other taxes due to the government, and to suspend every other activity of an offensive character.

Clause 3. The suspension of mass civil disobedience shall be continued until the atmosphere is so non-violent as to insure the non-repetition of atrocities such as at Gorakhpur or of the hooliganism such as at Bombay and Madras on the 17th of November and the 13th January.

Clause 5. All volunteer processions and public meetings for the defiance of authority should be stopped . . . .

Clause 6. The Working Committee advises Congress workers and organizations to inform the *ryots* (peasants) that withholding of rent payment to the *Zemindars* (landlords) is contrary to the Congress resolutions and injurious to the best interests of the country.

Clause 7. The Working Committee assures the *Zemindars* that the Congress movement is in no way intended to attack their legal rights and that even where the *ryots* have grievances, the Committee desires that redress be sought by mutual consultation and arbitration.

The 'atrocities' and 'hooliganism' referred to in Clause 3 were the uprising of the poor peasantry against the landlords, and the magnificent mass strikes with which the Prince was greeted.

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[1] The main resolution passed at the Ahmedabad Session (December, 1921) stated that 'mass Civil Disobedience' will be organized 'when the mass of people have been sufficiently trained in the methods of non-violence', and that 'this Congress . . . hereby appoints, until further instructions, Mahatma Gandhi as the sole Executive authority of the Congress and invests him with the full powers of the All-India Congress Committee'. After the events at Chauri Chaura, the Working Committee met at Bardoli on 12 February 1922, suspended mass Civil Disobedience and adopted the Constructive Programme. (For details, B.P. Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian Naitonal Congress*, 1935, pp. 377–98). S.N.R.

The following are the outstanding clauses of the so-called 'Constructive Program' adopted in place of militant non-cooperation and civil disobedience:—

1. 'To enlist 10,000,000 members of the Congress, all to believe in non-violence and truth as indispensable for *Swaraj* (home rule).
2. To popularize the *Charka* (spinning wheel) and *Khaddar* (homespun). All Congress workers should dress in Khaddar and learn to spin.
3. To organize National schools; but no picketing of government schools.
4. To uplift the depressed classes.
5. To organize a social service department to promote unity among all classes and races. This department is to render help to all in time of illness or accident.'

This is the program with which the Congress wants to lead the movement for national liberation. The consequences of such impotency are inevitable and were not long in making themselves felt in the movement.

A perusal of the Bardoli resolution and the sayings of Gandhi and other leaders do not permit one even to suspect that it might have been a caution against government provocation. The reasons for the shameful retreat are clearly and blandly stated. The interests of the propertied class must have first consideration: British rule may be 'Satanic', but landlordism is sacred.

The absence of any serious demonstration to protest against the arrest of the Ali Brothers revealed the weakness of the hold that the *Khilafat* cry had on the Moslem masses. The visit of the Prince of Wales in such a perilous period was contrived in order to measure the strength of the movement; so also was the policy of Reading in arresting a number of influential leaders of the Congress. The object of the government was realized; the cleavage between the masses and the leadership was revealed. Consequently there was no risk in coming down upon the Congress with a heavy hand of repression. This was done. Even Gandhi, whose post-Ahmedabad activities were more helpful to the government than anything else, was not spared, evidently to vindicate the prestige of Imperialism. The bourgeois character of the Congress had alienated it so much from the masses by the time Gandhi, the idol of the Indian people, was arrested; that such a monstrous action of repression, to commit which even the British government hesitated for months, created hardly a ripple of indignant demonstration in the country. The venerated Mahatma was arrested and sent to jail for six years; sentimental speeches were made to pay homage to the martyred saint and patriot; implicit faithfulness was professed to follow the line indicated by him; but what was remarkable, what revealed the real state of the movement was the absence of any spontaneous mass demonstrations like those which had taken place in the country at the least provocation during the last several years. The remnant of the Congress leadership consoled themselves and their rather disconcerted following with the argument that the Mahatma exhorted the people to remain absolutely non-violent on his arrest. But instances are not rare when such exhortations of the Mahatma, even his personal presence, could not stem the tide of mass action. The wave of mass revolt that swept the country following upon the *Hartal* (national strike) called during the Prince's visit as well as in consequence of the slogan of civil disobedience, is still fresh in the memory. All remonstrations, biddings and denunciations of the Mahatma were of no avail.

The removal of Gandhi marked the termination of the period in which the movement could be carried on with a vague, undefined program. It was possible formerly, because the socio-economic consciousness of the various social factors participating in the anti-British movement, had not been yet sufficiently clarified. Therefore all these incompatible, even antagonistic, elements could have the appearance of being united in a common political struggle. But the most prominent class line was revealed when in the Ahmedabad Congress, Gandhi set his face against the revolutionary action of the masses on one hand, and on the other, declared the necessity of making common cause with the Moderates, that is, the political party which consciously advocated the economic and political aggrandizement of the native capitalists and landlords. Since then, the reshuffling of forces in the Indian national movement has been going on. The bourgeoisie is so much terrified that it has been of late openly declaring its hostility to the interests of the toiling masses. This attitude naturally does not make for the unity of the political anti-British movement, and is not slow to produce pernicious results.

The various political tendencies inside the Congress organization, tendencies which have been released by the removal of the personality of Gandhi—too much respect for whom tied the hand and sealed the mouth of many a recalcitrant—came into evidence in the various Provincial Conferences held in the latter part of April. All these Conferences (Bengal, Maharashtra, Central Provinces and Berar) with the exception of Punjab, which met during a veritable reign of terror telling particularly heavily upon the Sikh peasants (Akalis), were conspicuous by the presence of two tendencies equally actuated by bourgeois ideals and orientations. The powerful revolutionary forces, expressed through the workers' and peasants' movements, had very little access to the deliberations and resolutions of these conferences. Strikes, trade unions and peasant revolts were not given any place in the speeches and resolutions, except to denounce them and conjure them up as forces of anarchy threatening the existence of the British Government and the native propertied class alike (Speech of J.M. Sen Gupta as the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Bengal Provincial Conference).

One of the two political tendencies is decidedly bourgeois and either openly or in thinly veiled language advocates a fusion of forces with the Moderates who stand for cooperation, or in other words, compromise with the imperialist overlord. The other is petty bourgeois extremism utterly incapable of understanding the present situation, therefore heading towards an intellectual rut divorced from the pragmatic politics of the bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the dynamics of mass energy on the other.

It is the latter tendency that has raised the voice of protest against Gandhism and attempts to drag the Congress out of the quagmire of metaphysical politics. In Maharashtra, Central Provinces and Berar there has developed a strong Left Wing which demands the revision of the so-called 'Constructive Program'.[2] In the Conferences this new opposition found itself still in the minority, but succeeded in forcing the appointment of sub-committees in order to investigate the achievements and failures of the Congress as well as to suggest changes in the Congress Program if necessary such as 1. *Swadeshi* (indigenous machine-industry) instead of *Charka* and *Khaddar*; 2. organization of volunteers for physical exercise and social service; 3. to send propagandists to foreign countries; 4. establish technical schools; 5. enter the Councils as Opposition. Some of these sub-committees, specially that of Nagpur (Central Provinces), had made reports recommending total repudiation of the Ahmedabad and Bardoli resolutions; but the new program they suggest is no more revolutionary than the former. If the one was impractical or metaphysical, the other is reformistic, in spite of its wordy extremism, which has absolutely no potentiality on account of lacking a social foundation. Consequently this incipient Left Wing opposition cannot do anything but fumble in the darkness of futile bourgeois extremism.

The purely bourgeois and reactionary policies of the Congress have had a harmful effect upon the working class movement. The second All-India Trade Union Congress met two months before the National Congress assembled at Ahmedabad. As a mass demonstration the

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[2] According to the official historian of the Congress during the mid-1930s, at the regular sitting of the AICC shortly after Bardoli, Gandhi was assailed on all sides. He was taken to task for resiling from the movement, and for the Bardoli resolutions in general. Bengal and Maharashtra tore him to pieces. . . A vote of censure on Gandhi was moved by Dr. Moonje at the AICC meeting . . . when it was put to vote only those who had spoken in favour voted for it, the rest of the House voting against it', (Sitaramayya, p. 400).

Trade Union Congress was of much greater significance than the National Congress. But the relaxation of political enthusiasm was already to be noticed. The great demonstration with which the Trade Union Congress met was more of an economic than political character. The leadership was very questionable. But the National Congress in its great consternation over the country-wide mass upheaval failed or refused to take notice of this new tendency in the labour movement. The only way was to launch an action program which could include the fight for improving the immediate material condition of the working class. But the Ahmedabad Congress started on a path which led farther and farther from the workers and peasants. Thus the leadership of the most important revolutionary social factor was left at the mercy of opportunist politicians, petty-bourgeois reformers and government agents.

The Bengal Provincial Trade Union Congress, which met almost simultaneously with the Political Conference of the same Province showed that the trade unions and the Labour movement as a whole had been almost completely divorced from the political movement and had come under the uncontested control of anti-revolutionary leadership. While the process of divorce of the Congress movement from the dynamic forces of revolution was thus revealed, the predominating tendency in the Bengal Provincial as well as four other Provincial gatherings was towards the Right, to join hands with the Moderates. The opposition of Left extremism was futile, because it was in no way connected with the forces of mass energy. There were small minorities which declared the necessity of going to the masses, but their voice was overwhelmed in the turmoil preparing the ground for a united front of the bourgeoisie, native and foreign.

In spite of this widening gulf between the political movement and the economic struggle of the working class, the latter has not yet completely fallen under anti-revolutionary leadership, because the objective forces of revolution are still in operation. Most of the trade unions federated in the Trade Union Congress are boards of officers rather than working class organizations. These officers are invariably outsiders making capital of the Labour movement, or government agents. They try to dictate how the workers should behave and organize, but are not yet able to curb the spontaneous, although largely unconscious revolt of the toiling masses. In many unions, a spirit of revolt against the 'upper class' leaders is growing.

In short, the bourgeoisie has proved itself incapable, even unwilling, to push the Indian movement ahead towards revolution. The petty-bourgeois extremism, which expects to gain very little by compromise with the imperialist exploiter, would like to go farther, but is unable to find and employ with resoluteness the suitable tactical weapon. The Congress, which has built up the skeleton of a nationwide organization, is thus left without a revolutionary leadership on the one hand, and is losing the support of the masses on the other. The element that can save the situation is yet very weak, but is not lacking. The development of this factor will prevent the split that is threatening the movement; it will keep the political movement for national liberation based on the revolutionary uprising of the masses, and will be able to push the unwilling bourgeoisie into the anti-imperialist struggle, thus utilizing the little revolutionary significance it possesses.

At the Cross-Roads*

The imminent collapse of Gandhism has brought the opposing elements within the Congress Party to a parting of the ways. The right-wing, headed by Pundit Malaviya,[3] is seeking re-union with the Moderates, their spiritual kin, and judging by the latest pronouncements of the Liberal League and kindred organizations, this happy alliance is not far distant. The Left Wing, which made up the so-called Extremist element, is floundering about in a bewilderment pitiful to contemplate. The recent Provincial Conferences held in Bengal, Central Provinces, Maharashtra and Punjab, expose this division in the Congress ranks very clearly and the resolutions adopted, as well as those which were defeated, show the general tendencies of both camps.

The Moderates, once re-admitted to the Congress ranks, will see the end of Non-Cooperation's spectacular career and a general purging of the elements unfit for a party of Constitutionalists upholding a government of law and order. What then will become of the Extremists, who for three years past have headed a movement, whose avowed object was the overturning of the present satanic system and the establishment of Swaraj based upon some form of representative government?

Depleted though their number is by numerous arrests and convictions, there are enough Extremists at large to make their influence felt in the guidance of the Congress at this critical juncture, did they but know clearly what they wanted, and what was needed to save the situation. Their own confusion and lack of political program creates division among their own ranks. They speak of a 'constructive program' as opposed to the destructive one whose slogan was 'Non-violent Non-Cooperation, Boycott and Civil Disobedience', but they have nothing better to offer than 'Swadeshi, the establishment of technical schools and propaganda abroad'. It should be here pointed out that both these so-called 'programs' are not programs at all, but tactics, i.e. the methods for attaining a given end, which is a program. A real program is what the Congress has never adopted, unless we call Mr Gandhi's 'Swaraj' a program.

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* Originally published in *The Vanguard of Indian Independence*, Vol I, No 3, 15 June 1922, as unsigned editorial under the title: 'Which Way?' S.N.R.

[3] Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861–1946) founded the Hindu Mahasabha in 1906, but was also elected President of the Congress in 1909 and 1918. He became a member of the Imperial Legislative Council in 1909, and was an elected member of the Central Legislative Assembly from 1924 to 1930. A strong believer in *Varnashrama Dharma* (Caste System) and Hindu scriptures, he was also a great organizer, his most lasting achievement being the foundation of the Benaras Hindu University of which he was Vice Chancellor from 1918 to 1938. *Malaviyaji Birth Centenary Volume, BHU, 1961,* S.N.R.

If the Congress seeks a constructive program to save itself from imminent disintegration, it should take this vague formula of Swaraj and courageously analyse it, find out what it means and then find ways to attain it. The leaders of the Congress instinctively feel that such an analysis will create sharp divisions in their own ranks, and therefore they avoid it. But for the sake of a superficial unity which is already giving way, they are sacrificing something more essential to their very existence as a fighting body, and this is the support of the masses.

If three years ago, the Congress attained to nation-wide power and significance in the eyes of the British Government, it was because the social class upon which it based itself was no longer a few intellectuals, but the broad masses of the Indian people, who had commenced a revolutionary struggle to improve their material existence. By assuming command of this struggle, the Congress became for the first time a popular assembly, whose demands were backed up by the overpowering force of mass-action. A National strike was called to protest against the Rowlatt Act, and the Indian people obeyed; a Hartal was ordered to protest against the visit of the Prince of Wales, and the response was nation-wide. When any party commands such support, it must be respected, even by an autocratic government.

But today, the Congress no longer commands this support of the broad masses, and the blame lies with itself. It is not because Mr Gandhi was beloved by the Indian people, who have forsaken the Congress since his arrest. Not at all. Mr Gandhi meant for the masses a *'Gandhi Raj'* in which the peasants would not have to pay taxes, in which the factory workers would work less and be paid more. The simple Indian worker and peasant, who obeyed the Congress dictates so blindly and unhesitatingly, who struck, were arrested or wounded and killed by the armed police, were fighting for *their* Swaraj, which they had defined for themselves, according to their greatest needs.

But the Swaraj of the Congress leaders was not their Swaraj, as they discovered after painful experience, after innumerable sacrifices, failures, disappointments and disillusionments. The Congress Swaraj ordered them to give up Non-payment of taxes and declared it 'dangerous to make political use of the factory-workers'.

Today, the Indian workers and peasants are going their own way, and the Congress, robbed of their support, has sunk into impotency. If it would regain its lost power, let it go to the Trade Unions and the Peasant Sabhas, listen to the grievances there discussed, and incorporate them into a truly constructive program which will draw the wide masses once more within the folds of the Congress Party, to fight under its command for Swaraj.

The New Opposition*

Steady development of the social forces behind the movement is clarifying the political orientation of our leadership. The slogan and methods of fight, evolved out of the confused upheaval two years ago, do not fit into the present situation. The necessity of defining their point of view—of demonstrating if they are capable of leading the movement further ahead—is being forced upon our leaders. The Bengal, Central Provinces, Berar and Maharashtra Provincial Conferences have disclosed the crystallization of a strong opposition to the doctrinarian pacifism and metaphysical abstraction into which the Congress has been running headlong since the apostles of 'spiritual civilization' became frightened by the magnificent display of mass-energy during the Prince's visit. Central Provinces and Maharashtra, led by Dr Moonje and Mr Baburao Gokhale respectively, have initiated the agitation for putting the Congress activities more on the basis of practical politics and material interests of the people.[4] The amendments, suggested by the sub-committees appointed by these two Provincial Conferences, if accepted, will not save the Congress from the present crisis. The Ahmedabad, Bardoli and Delhi resolutions not only stand in need of radical revision, but they have to be entirely repudiated as the irresponsible actions of persons for whom the movement has grown too big and awe-inspiring.

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* Originally published in *The Vanguard of Indian Independence,* Vol. I, No. 2, 1 June 1922, under the title 'Crisis in the Congress', signed 'Manabendra Nath Roy', S. N. R.

[4] Balakrishna Shivaram Moonje (1872–1948) began his political career as a follower of Tilak by organizing Ganapati and Shivaji festivals. Although opposed to Gandhi he took part in the satyagraha movement and was twice arrested. He worked subsequently in the Swaraj Party, the Responsive Co-operation Party, and later the Hindu Mahasabha of which he was elected President. In 1937 he founded the Hindu Military Education Society and started its 'Bhonsala Military School' near Nasik.

Damodar Viswanath Gokhale (1885–1962) was also a follower of Tilak; he became Joint Secretary of the Home Rule League at it inception in 1916; was editor of Tilak's English Weekly, the *Mahratta* from 1918 to 1930 and of his Marathi Weekly, the *Kesari* from 1931 to 1946. A leader of the Congress in Maharashtra, he later joined the Swaraj Party and then the Responsive Co-operation Party. S.N.R.

'The aim of the Congress is thoroughly worldly and for worldly happiness, and has to be attained by worldly means which should be easily understandable and practicable'. This declaration of the Nagpur sub-committee challenges the current philosophical conception of Indian nationalism. It is a good start made not too early—in fact rather too late, the Ahmedabad Congress was the most opportune moment. The modifications suggested, however, do not come up to the expectation. Their introduction will bring the Congress away from Tolstoyian pacifism, but closer to the Liberal League. The report of the sub-committee rightly criticizes the Khaddar propaganda and points out the impracticability of boycotting the schools and courts. But its recommendations on these points of the present programme are in no way revolutionary. The task before the Congress, nevertheless, is to lead a mass movement essentially revolutionary and growing more and more so every day. Since the fateful day of Bardoli, when militant Non-Co-operation was abandoned and the spontaneous beginning of Mass Civil Disobedience was repudiated, the Congress has been advocating a line of tactics not only impractical, but non-revolutionary. This reprehensible tendency has of late degenerated into a pseudo-spiritual cult, which makes a religion out of politics.

Its non-revolutionary character has been evolving an anti-revolutionary, even reactionary spirit. This is the real danger which the movement faces to-day; and we must say that the amendments of the Maharashtra and C.P. opposition fail to take it into account. If the so-called 'Constructive Programme' of Bardoli is futile and imbecile, that of the new Opposition cannot be considered to be anything more than practical reformism. It touches the moot question of Civil Disobedience very timidly. Neither Charka, nor Khaddar, nor the cult of non-violence will bring Swaraj to India; but may it not also be asked how are we going to be free by starting a few polytechnical schools, or by wearing Bombay mill cloth instead of Khaddar, or by sending a number of our brilliant graduates to do propaganda in the foreign countries? No, the latter scheme is also as futile as the former is impossible. Both of them shirk the fight, because the former is terrified by the forces behind the national awakening, whereas the latter does not take them into calculation, still thinking the national movement to be an affair of the small class of pauperized intellectuals.

In the medley of retreat, ordered from Bardoli and turned into a disorderly rout under the command of those socially belonging to the enemy camp, it is reassuring to hear a courageous call for a halt. But this halt should be immediately followed by warlike preparations, otherwise the consternation in the ranks will not subside. Those who desire to assume the command of our national forces, shamefully abandoned in the very front lines of the battle, must measure carefully the potential strength of these forces in order to lead them farther ahead. The Indian nation—not the Indian nation of 'educated' respectable middle-class, but of the peasant and working masses—has begun the struggle for *material* progress. This struggle will go on under all circumstances— in spite of the strong doses of religious other-worldliness, administered by those who really constitute the bulwark of reaction, in order to prevent this rising tide of rebellion. Any programme, any tactics, that does not fit into the sweeping nature of this great revolt is bound to be either reactionary or futile. The tendency, which will attempt so stem this mighty tide, is reactionary and can be found sooner or later in its proper place by the side of the enemy. The leadership, which makes a cult of non-violence, which sacrifices the material welfare of a struggling people on the altar of a spiritual existence, and which went bankrupt at the sight of the mass-action in Bombay, Guntur and Chauri-Chaura, is socially hostile to the forces that are the very life of the Indian movement and that are alone capable of conquering our national independence. Therefore this leadership is reactionary; today we find it fraternizing with the Moderates, who in their turn will ingratiate them into the respectable company of the British rulers—the traditional defenders of peace and order, the bulwark of security of life and property, the gallant patrons of our heritage of 'spiritual civilization' (so long as we stick to the Mayabad.) Futile will be proved those attempts which depend on the statics and not dynamics of our forces, which ignore the fountain-head of revolutionary energy in the scheme of 'practical politics'. The New Opposition belongs to this class and will end in a blind alley if it too fails to liberate itself from the traditions of respectable middle-class psychology.

If the Congress abandons its metaphysical programme only to launch upon a career of technical efficiency, it will surely find itself divorced from the revolutionary forces, despite the high practicality of its new politics. Thus the movement will be split in two parts, viz. one, of the middle class with a middle-class psychology and the other, a struggle for improving the economic condition of the workers and peasants. Divorced from the masses, the former will remain impotent and amenable to compromise with the government whenever some concessions calculated to further the interests of the middle class will be granted. Whereas, on the other hand, disillusioned of the prospect of gaining Swaraj, the masses will temporarily withdraw from the political movement in order to devote themselves to a purely economic struggle under the leadership of conservative and reformist leaders. Such an eventuality spells a depression in the movement and the consequent delay in attaining national liberation.

This eventuality has to be avoided. This task devolves upon the New Opposition, which must know the forces that are pushing them forward. The revolutionary energy of the toiling masses, which will overthrow the foreign domination as the first step towards freedom, is making itself felt in the Congress ranks through the medium of those who have challenged the fanatic pacifism of the spiritual reactionaries and have declared material progress to be the goal of our national struggle. To develop the consciousness of the masses by identifying the national interests with the immediate interests of the workers and peasants, is the task to be undertaken. Not in the polytechnical school, nor in the volunteer corps, composed mainly of students, but in the midst of strikes, trade-unions, peasant revolts and the agrarian movement are being and will be marshalled the forces of national liberation. The Congress has two alternatives before it; either to assume the leadership of these forces by showing the capacity to lead them cautiously, strategically but unwaveringly forward in the struggle, or to abdicate the national leadership in order to go over eventually to the side of the enemy.

Wrecking the Councils*

The question of entering the Reformed councils has been a bone of contention in the Non-Co-operation camp. It is certain that a great battle will be fought at Gaya over the proposition of abandoning the programme of Triple Boycott, particularly the boycott of the Councils.

This projected move is very debatable and much consideration is necessary before a definite decision is taken on the matter. Therefore it is but natural that there is so much divergence of opinion expressed. But is it discussed in the right way? Are all the innumerable issues involved in it seriously taken into consideration? We cannot give an affirmative answer. If we take the utterances of Mr Patel and Hardyal Nag as the typical official point of view, which refuses to admit such a change in the Congress programme, we cannot say that these gentlemen stand on rational ground. According to them, and it appears that they represent a large volume of orthodox Congress opinion, the question is to be decided on ethical grounds. To them it is a question of loyalty to the leader. Hardyal Nag declared that by making the suggestion of entering the Councils, the president of the Bengal Provincial Conference heaped shame upon Bengal. Mr Patel wondered how could we think of such a step when 20,000 patriots were in jail. But such sentimental arguments cannot curb a political tendency growing out of the socio-economic heterogeneity and the present decomposition of the Congress organization.

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It is a known fact that in the Nagpore Congress there existed a strong faction led by C.R. Das among others, opposed to the boycott of the Reformed Councils.[5] Evidently this faction, which kept quiet at that time for the sake of unity, either thought that the Reformed Councils could be of some use, or did not believe that the proposed boycott of the Councils would paralyse the government. These two points of view might not have been expressed at that moment, but they did exist and constituted the silent opposition. There is, however, a greater divergence between these two bodies of opinion, than that between them and the official Non-Co-operators. The first, that is those who thought that some benefit could be secured through the Reformed Councils, were against the boycott because they considered it to be a mistaken step. Whereas the second, that is, those who did not believe that the boycott of councils would paralyse the government, were opposed to the boycott resolution because they thought it was useless, it would not succeed. Experience has proved the latter to be right, because they were actuated by a revolutionary tendency, although in many cases still unconscious and undeveloped. The boycott of the Reformed Councils by the Congress has not in any way injured the government. On the contrary, it has provided it with Councils exactly after its desire. The boycott left the field clear for the rank reactionaries and senile liberals, who flocked to the aid of the government in its efforts to make 'the first experiments of democracy' successful. In so far as Imperialism is concerned, the Reforms have been successful. What was the motive of introducing these 'reforms?' It was to split the Indian national struggle, to buy the services of the upper and a section of the middle classes. This object has been realized in spite of the boycott of Councils by the Congress. The government has not been paralysed; on the contrary, the Congress is threatened to be wrecked on this rock.

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[5] The Non-Co-operation Movement was formally launched by Gandhi on 1 August 1920 under the auspices of the Central Khilafat Committee. It was adopted by the Congress at its special session at Calcutta in September 1920. The Non-Co-operation resolution, moved by Gandhi, was opposed at the Calcutta session by C.R. Das, B.C. Pal, Malaviya, M.A. Jinnah and others, but when after prolonged debate the Gandhi resolution was put to vote; it was carried by 1886 against 884. Das and his followers went to the Nagpur session (December 1920) of the Congress with the declared intention of opposing Gandhi, but a private understanding between Das and Gandhi resulted in Das not only withdrawing his opposition but actually moving the main resolution in support of Non-Co-operation. The suspension of Civil Disobedience in February 1922, however, revived the Council Entry issue and at the end of the Gaya Session (December 1922) Das resigned from the Presidentship of the Congress and founded the Swaraj Party. P.C. Ray, *Life and Times of C.R. Das*, London, 1927. S.N.R.

Those Non-co-operators, who would not include the boycott of the Councils in their programme, were cleverer politicians. They had no fundamental dislike for the Councils; they even found in them the means of accomplishing what they wanted, viz. the political and economic advancement of the middle and intellectual classes. But their political sagacity, not clouded by sentimental effusions and metaphysical abstractions, recognized the necessity of entering the Councils with a force behind them. They wanted to enter the Councils not as willing tools of the government, as the present sycophants are, but as the representatives of the rebellious people. Thus they advocated the rest of the Non-Co-operation clauses calculated to develop the agitation already growing spontaneously among the masses. It is this element which has of late given up its former silent opposition, and has put forward persistently the necessity of entering the Councils. They think that the time has come when members of the Congress Party will be in a position to constitute a powerful opposition inside the Councils. Or in other words, relying on the support of the mass-energy expressed through the movement, they expect to force upon the government the necessity of granting to the 'politically minded middle-class' something more substantial than the sham reforms of the present. Once launched upon, there will be no end to this course. In reality, it means nothing less than eventual abandonment of the principle of Non-Co-operation. No wonder that the doctrinarian and metaphysical Non-co-operators will take alarm at this projected move, which will end in purging the Congress of all reactionary religious leadership and delivering it over to the control of those whose political philosophy hardly differs from that of the Constitutional Democrats of the Liberal League. Or in other words, participation in the Councils with the object of making use of them will end in finding a *modus vivendi* between the Congress Party and the 'satanic government'. This is, nevertheless, the inevitable consequence of a movement based upon the interests of the middle class, and the latest developments have demonstrated unmistakably what the Congress means by Swaraj. It is Self-government or Dominion Status, the same Kingdom of Heaven coveted by the Moderates, the same readjustment that will permit the native middle-class a considerable share in the political administration and economic exploitation of the country.

After three years of noisy fermentation, which by the way has had its historical importance, the Congress is settling down to the same definite political principle. The various elements that went into its none too well-knit make-up are trying to mark out diverse and even conflicting courses according to their economic interests and social affiliation. The most politically developed, socially conscious and numerically strong faction is very likely to impose upon the entire Congress Party the course suitable to itself. The controversy over the participation in the Councils is but one expression of the struggle between reaction and progress which has made the present constitution of the Congress Party untenable. The orthodox Non-co–operators, the transcendental Swarajists, are the standard-bearers of reaction in the Congress and as such are bound to be overthrown by the 'politically minded middle-class intellectuals' who stand for progress, although the progress they want does not need separation from the imperial connection. Therefore, in this tussle for supremacy inside the Congress, no revolutionary factor is taking active part, notwithstanding the fact that it was with the backing of the awakening mass-energy that the reactionaries held sway for three years, and it is again with the help of the same revolutionary force that the progressive middle-class is on the eve of coming to power. The victory of the progressive tendency will certainly be a step forward, because it will dissipate the reactionary spell holding the masses in ignorance. But this victory at the same time will signify the prelude to another compromise with the imperial overlords, because 'His Majesty's loyal Opposition' in the Reformed Councils is not very far from the officialdom of the 'autonomous provinces'. And what more than 'fiscal autonomy' or 'provincial autonomy' or some such other concessions calculated to further the interests of the native capitalist class and find more employment for the intellectuals, can be expected through the struggle carried on within the limited scope of the Reformed Councils?

So much as to those who believe in 'constructive activities' in the Councils. Their programme is evident. They want to utilize all the avenues available for getting into a close struggle with the government and wrest as much possible from its unwilling hands. In order to realize this programme, they want to have the 'united nation' organized inside the Congress, 'their political party'. It is a well-known middle-class tactic, whose success coincides with the betrayal of the masses. History is full of such betrayals, from the infamous 'Manchester Massacres or Peterloo', as it is commonly known, to the Collins Rule in Ireland, and the Adly affair in Egypt. An issue, which is inevitably bound to lead up to some such betrayal in the history of India's struggle for national liberation, is of little concern to the revolutionaries, to those upon whom devolves the historic task of overthrowing the foreign domination, in order that the people of India can be started on the road to progress, material and spiritual. So there must be a revolutionary angle from which this question of entry into the Councils can be approached. If it is to continue leading the struggle for revolutionary nationalism, the Congress must keep clear of the path of Constitutional Democracy of the 'politically minded middle-class' on the one hand, and give up futile and impossible methods based on doctrinarism and ignorance of the social forces on the other. To stake the prestige of the movement on the successful boycott of the Reformed Councils was a mistake. The Congress succeeded in boycotting the Councils; but it was not the boycott in itself that was aimed at. The object was to paralyse the government. The tactics adopted have failed to realize the goal. To stick doggedly to a method which has proved futile will be to add to the mistake already committed. This cannot be permitted under any pretext. The Non–Co-operation programme has to be carried through. If one method has failed, a new one has to be conceived and more militant measures should be resorted to. We want to paralyse the government; we want to show that no government can forever rule a people determined to be free. It is necessary to attack the enemy whereever there is an opening. We should approach the enemy not to fraternize, negotiate, compromise, but to deal him a square blow at every possible moment. How can our Co-operation be vital to the existence or even to the prestige of the government, if the necessity for such co–operation does not exist? To boycott the councils does not injure the government. It is necessary to carry the fight into the enemy's camp. The councils, which add new justification to the imperial domination, should *as a body* non-co-operate with the government. And this cannot be done so long as the Councils are a monopoly of the representatives of the rich capitalist class in league with the government. Nor will it be done when the 'politically minded' middle-class intellectuals and office hunters will form an Opposition in the name of the 'united people' expressing their will through the Congress. It can only be realized when the Councils are captured entirely by revolutionary Non–co-operators, who will enter the Councils, not with the hope of getting as much benefit as possible out of them, but to use them as a weapon of resolute warfare. The Councils with an overwhelming non–co–operating majority will refuse to be an ante-chamber affair of the imperial overlords, and as the representative of the people will declare itself the supreme authority of the land. This will be a revolutionary act, and participation in the Councils with this object in view, will be revolutionary tactics. But a revolutionary party is required to carry out this tactics with determination.

Civil Disobedience*

The Enquiry Committee's report is not yet published; neither is the character of the evidence recorded by it known publicly. The procedure of closed-door sessions has from the beginning veiled the Committee in mystery. It is interesting to see those stalwart opponents of bureaucratic methods discussing behind closed doors a question of such vital importance to the future of the movement. Those, who challenge the right of the foreigner to decide what is good and what is bad for the country, find quite logical that half-a-dozen men should pass judgment as to the capability or otherwise of the entire people to advance on a revolutionary path. Well, this is a constitutional question, and we are more concerned with larger aspects of the matter. We do not care to challenge or defend the ethical or juridical authority of the Committee, because a revolutionary movement cannot be guided according to rigid legal and moral concepts; besides, who is to set up the standard for such concepts? But what we are interested in is whether the Committee reflects the situation in the country.

Though the joint and official finding of the Committee is not yet available, it is not difficult to surmise what will be the general trend of it from the opinions expressed now and then by its individual members. It is quite evident from such expressions of individual opinion that the Committee made up its mind before beginning the inquiry. It is not approaching the question with what is called an open mind. Even the most exhaustive answer to the questionnaire will not in any way indicate if the people are ready for Civil Disobedience or not. The standard set up by the Committee seems to be completion of the Bardoli-Delhi Programme. This is enough to infer that the Committee will surely decide against the immediate inauguration of Civil Disobedience.[6] The evidence collected by whichever method—in camera or by open hearing—will not prove that the so-called Constructive Programme has been realized even partially, because under the present circumstances, most of the clauses of the programme are not realizable. Therefore, it is but logical to expect that a measure, whose adoption is conditional upon the realization of something unrealizable, will never be adopted. Or in other words, our leaders will postpone the inauguration of Civil Disobedience on the ground that the country is not yet ready for such a step. And in so doing they will throw the blame upon the people.

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[6] At its meeting at Lucknow in June 1922 the AICC asked the Congress President to constitute a Civil Disobedience Inquiry Committee to tour round the country and report on the situation. The Committee consisted of Motilal Nehru, C. Rajagopalachari, M.A. Ansari, V.J. Patel, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and the Acting Congress President Ajmal Khan. The Committee issued a questionnaire and received written replies from 459 witnesses. It submitted its Report in October 1922 according to which 'the country was not prepared at present to embark upon general Mass Civil Disobedience'. The Committee did not find

Leaving for a moment the question of the inauguration of Civil Disobedience, let us examine the programme whose realization is supposed to determine the fitness of the people. Because not only the Enquiry Committee, but the entire official leadership of the Congress seems to insist upon the completion of the constructive Programme before considering any other means of fight. Hakim Ajmal Khan declared at Allahabad: 'I have been told that the Bardoli resolution did not satisfy the country's demand. It is a pity that the people would not take to activities which did not provide them with excitement. The Constructive Programme of the Congress was the very foundation of Swaraj, and if they are not prepared to carry it out, that only showed that they were not ready for the higher duty which would devolve upon them.' To those leaders, whose opinion is expressed by the Hakimji, the movement has become very simplified. It is but a bundle of formulae to be recited with religious fervour to hush all disquieting clamours of opposition, and which should be held before the people to carry out under all circumstances. None will question the political sagacity of feeling the sentiment and spirit of the people before leading them farther in the struggle. The gravity involved in the tactics of Civil Disobedience is of such an enormous nature that it should not be launched with a light heart. The people must be led step by step towards mass Civil Disobedience, which is nothing less than open revolt. But this preparatory work is not done by simply brandishing the so-called Constructive Programme. If the people have lost all enthusiasm for it, then something must be wrong with it, then it has failed to be adequate for the purpose for which it is supposed to have been adopted. Consequently, if the Congress is willing to lead the people towards the stage of revolutionary enthusiasm

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among Congress Workers much enthusiasm for the Constructive Programme. On the question of Council Entry the Committee was sharply divided; Motilal Nehru, V.J. Patel and Ajmal Khan recommended that 'Non-Co-operators should contest elections' but Rajagopalachari, Ansari and Iyengar maintained that 'there should be no change in respect of the boycott of Councils'. The Civil Disobedience Committee cost the Congress Rs. 16,000. (Sitaramayya, pp. 409–21). S.N.R.

needed for the inauguration of Civil Disobedience, new methods must be discovered and applied during the preparatory period. But by sticking to the worn-out formula of the Constructive Programme, which, according to their own confession, has ceased to appeal to the imagination of the people, our leaders simply betray their unwillingness to adopt any measure that may tend towards revolutionary development.

Now let us see if the people can be blamed for having lost enthusiasm for the Constructive Programme, and if there is any possibility of reviving the subsiding popular enthusiasm by the activities within the province of the Bardoli resolution.

The principal points in the Constructive Programme are: the Charka, Khaddar, Removal of Untouchability and to fight the Drink habit. The first two are economic questions and as such should be dealt with purely from the economic point of view. No sentimental or ethical issue should be made out of them, because by such confusion the success of the programme is in no way helped. The third is a social problem with a deep economic foundation. The fourth is also a social problem, but is approached by our leaders purely from the ethical angle.

In spite of its failure, the Charka-Khaddar slogan is still the one on which the Congress insists upon staking its future. It is what is called the burning question of the day. It has two aspects; one constructive, the other destructive. One purely economical, the other political, agitational. It is with the latter that we are concerned here. We are leaving out of consideration its constructive, that is purely economic aspect, although the possibility of its success in the political aspect fundamentally depends upon its economic soundness. Now, if the inauguration of Civil Disobedience should be made conditional upon the realization of the Charka-Khaddar Programme, it follows that before Civil Disobedience is declared, the Charka must be introduced into every house, at least in the majority of families, and that Khaddar must be worn by all. Is the creation of such a condition possible? We have to approach the question from the side of possibility and not desirability. We may like everybody to ply the Charka and wear Khaddar; but if these acts on the part of the people are to be looked upon as preliminaries to something else, it is necessary to examine whether there is any possibility of success in this respect; if the people can (not will) do what we ask them to do.

All reports go to show that the price of Khaddar is higher than that of the mill-made cloth. Of course, this was evident to everybody acquainted with the rudimentary principles of production. It was not necessary to wait and see the results. Today we are faced with the prosaic and material fact that one has to pay four to six rupees to buy a piece of Khaddar. Taking into consideration the average income of the Indian worker and peasant we know that they can spend a certain amount and no more on clothing a year. This is the irreducible minimum; because the income is so paltry as not to cover the expenses of two meals a day. These are facts all too well known to every nationalist leader. Now an average peasant can spend, say ten rupees a year on clothes. If this amount could buy Khaddar there would be a chance of inducing him to use it in spite of other disadvantages. But if, as is the case, it does not buy the minimum quantity of clothing he needs, he cannot be expected to go naked rather than wear the 'unholy' foreign stuff. The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal failed on account of this economic impossibility, and not for any lack of enthusiasm or spirit of sacrifice. Sentiment can keep a movement going for a certain length of time, but it cannot last forever unless fed with more substantial factors.

The fate of the Charka has not been any better, and on account of the same reason, viz. the economic fallacy involved in it. Since its high price is daily restricting the sale of Khaddar, the manufacture of the latter has to be given up and the market for home-spun yarn becomes daily reduced. So the fate of the Charka is doomed in spite of all the virtues ascribed to it by our leaders. So long as an overwhelmingly large majority of the population lives in the village, and so long as machine production is not extensively introduced in the country, there is room for craft industries. But a propaganda for the revival of cottage industry does not prepare the people for a purely political movement.

The last two items in the Constructive Programme have no more chance of success, since the Congress approaches the problems from a wrong angle. Untouchability is a heritage of the old society and will only disappear with the triumph of the new. No amount of ethical propagandizing will remove this prejudice any earlier than it is swept away by the development of higher means of production. Neither will the drink-habit be cured by the sermons of those who are not ready to strike at the very root of the causes that make the poor wage-slave take to drink, driven by desperation. Four or eight annas a day do not save his family from starvation, but buy enough of liquor to drown his sorrows in unconsciousness. The government knows it well; therefore makes ample provision so that the worker can find this poison near at hand. You can picket the liquor shops of the big cities. But who is going to counteract the influence of the chain of breweries in the interior of Behar, Central Provinces, Assam, and other parts? On the long way from his work back to home, the care-worn father of the family passes no less than half-a-dozen of these grog shops where he can buy a bottle of liquor for a few annas.

The above must be sufficient to prove that the present Constructive Programme is not possible of completion. Those who still insist upon it are not anxious to develop the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people. They are opposed to any such eventuality. But those who sincerely want to see our movement progress, should find other means of creating a situation fit for Civil Disobedience. These means should be such as to appeal to the immediate interests of the masses of the people. They should remember the enthusiasm with which the slogan of non-payment of taxes was welcomed by the poor peasantry of the United Provinces, in Bengal and North Madras. The organization of several thousand volunteers in the towns, volunteers ready to go to jail by violating the technicalities of law, should not be looked upon as the pre-requisite for the inauguration of Civil Disobedience. Because Civil Disobedience will not be any more successful than the other clauses of Non-Co-operation, unless it is declared by the masses. Therefore our preparatory work consists of demonstrating practically and not by sentimental humanitarian cant, that the Congress is the leader of the worker and peasant population. We must approach them not with orders for impossible tasks, but with practical methods of fight calculated to improve their miserable existence. Work along this line will increase the enthusiasm of the masses and will mobilize them under the banner of the Congress. Then will come the time when Civil Disobedience can be inaugurated with all the possibilities of a revolutionary development.

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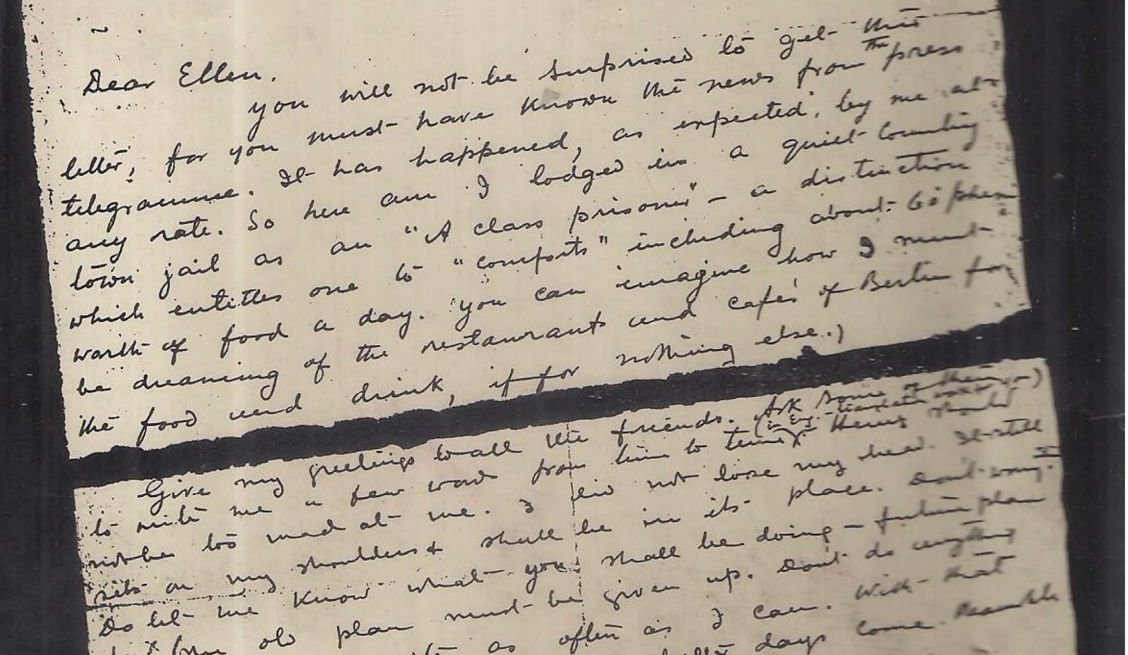

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11 AUG. 1931
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Miss Ellen Gottschalk
Bregenzerstr. 16, Berlin-Wilmersdorf
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Dear Ellen.

You will not be surprised to get this letter; for you must have known the news from the press telegramme. It has happened, as expected, by me at any rate. So here am I lodged in a quiet country town jail as an "A class prisoner" – a distinction which entitles one to "comforts" including about 60 pfen. worth of food a day. (You can imagine how I must be dreaming of the restaurants and cafés of Berlin for the food and drink, if for nothing else.)

Give my greetings to all the friends. Ask some of them [illegible] to write me a few words from time to time (i.e. Heinz should) not be too mad at me. I did not lose my head. It still sits on my shoulders & shall be in its place. Don't worry. Do let me know what you shall be doing – future plan etc.x (The old plan must be given up. Don't do anything rash. I shall write as often as I can. With that we must remain content until better days come. Meanwhile I remain)

yours as ever
Roy

Could you send me the paper submitted by the Soviet Delegation to the recent International Congress of the History of Science, London? It is published with the title "Science at Cross-Roads".

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